PHILIP
KAPPEL

Hallie S. Brown. 1929

LORD
TIMOTHY DEXTER
of NEWBURYPORT, MASS.

"First in the East, first in the West,
And the Greatest philosopher

Lord Timothy Dexter

Lord Timothy Dexter

Jonathan Plummer

in the Western World"

P. K.

LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER

of NEWBURYPORT, MASS^{tts}

First in the East, *first in the* West, *and the* Greatest Philosopher *in the* Western World

BY J. P. MARQUAND

Author of THE BLACK CARGO, ETC.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I

In which Timothy Dexter Makes Breeches, and, selling his own, Arrives in Newburyport, Mass., a Place which was "Noue" to Him 3

CHAPTER II

In which Dexter Acquires an efficient Wife, four Stepchildren, two Children of his own, a Housekeeper, and finally a Fortune 30

CHAPTER III

In which Dexter Astounds His Fellow Townsmen by becoming a self made Gentleman, and buys the Historic House of a Patriotic but Unfortunate Merchant 61

CHAPTER IV

In which Dexter Astonishes the World by Buying Warming Pans and Mittens and Sending them to the Indies 89

CHAPTER V

In which Dexter Delivers a famous Speech, Honors the Late King of France, and Becomes an Author and a man of Great Importance . . . 115

CHAPTER VI

In which Dexter Considers his Wife, though Mortal, as a Ghost, finds Himself the father of a

PAGE

Bibulous Son and a Grasping Son-in-Law, and finally shakes the Dust of Newburyport from his feet 149

CHAPTER VII

In which Dexter Quarrels with a Baptist Divine, is too Attentive to the Fair Sex, is sadly Beaten by a Lawyer, and yet becomes Lord Dexter King of Chester and returns to Newburyport even more important than before 177

CHAPTER VIII

In which Dexter Buys the Palace of still another Unfortunate Merchant, employs a Poet Laureate, rewards him Royally, and does many other remarkable things, becoming to a nobleman . . 195

CHAPTER IX

In which Lord Dexter Astonishes Mankind with a Rehearsal of his Funeral, gives the Whole World a remarkable Museum, and becomes himself First in the East 233

CHAPTER X

In which Dexter Breaks his last Lance against the Windmill of his Life through the Pages of a most singular and Philosophic Book 272

CHAPTER XI

In which Lord Dexter at last Becomes very still indeed, Has Doubts cast on the Destination of his Soul, yet still remains a Person of Importance . . 303

APPENDIX

A Pickle for the Knowing Ones 327

Lord Timothy Dexter

Lord Timothy Dexter

CHAPTER I

In which Timothy Dexter Makes Breeches, and, selling his own, Arrives in Newburyport, Mass., a Place which was "Noue" to Him.

ABOUT midway down the main residential street of Newburyport, Massachusetts, which has been named High Street because of its salubrious and peculiar geographical position, there stands a square white house of a nautical Georgian style of architecture, set well back from the sidewalk. There are other houses in Newburyport of this familiar square construction more pleasing to the eye, with balustrades on the roofs and cupolas and carved cornices. The curious visitor may find in this venerable town older houses and newer houses, each bearing the trace of decades and of centuries, and

each boasting a marked individuality, for Newburyport has always permitted the individual to flourish. Yet of all the relics of past grandeur and of present prosperity, this white house has a quality which is quite its own.

Though it is square with an utterly correct squareness, and possesses the conventional cupola and portico, it somehow lacks that repression and chasteness of line from which was born the jig-saw and scroll work age of subsequent revolt. There is a distinctive gaiety in its Georgian decoration, and a defiant merry lilt to its portico and windows, hard to explain, but none the less apparent. The agency which achieves it is the somewhat startling presence on the cupola of a large gold eagle, slightly out of proportion to the building where he perches.

You cannot help seeing him, for he is a magnificent bird. He is one of that ancient species of hundred per cent, rampant eagles, with a ferocious beak and talons, such an eagle as once surmounted knockers, mirrors, and the stern scrolls of ships when the republic was still young. His great gold wings, not outspread and yet not folded, have a jaunty angle, and there is a defiance and fresh hope in the

breast and beak of that venerable bird which a century of New England weather has been incapable of quelling. As he rests there with wings at the alert he gives an impression of arrogance quite out of keeping with his size. Somehow he seems capable of carrying away that whole white house, and of bearing it to the clouds of legend. Though of gilded wood he has a compelling presence, for once you set an eye upon him, the whole house seems like his pedestal, all built especially for him. You perceive it is not the house but the eagle upon his lonely perch which gives the impression of vivacity and pretentiousness, and renders a quiet spot eccentric in its own fashion.

The sight of him makes one pause involuntarily and jolts the mind into a wordless question. Who carved that eagle out? Who clapped him on a private house instead of on a State House dome? There is a dim, yet undeniable trace of personality in the act, which the eagle still reflects in a mute but expressive way. There is an unmistakable and not wholly eradicated print of a spirit bizarre and gay, not trammelled by mundane censure, and groping for great effects with a genuine Olympic ambition. Though only

the eagle is left, the spirit lingers; and well it may.

The eagle is no plebeian eagle. He and the house itself were once the property of one of the most expansive, preposterous, and yet able and august individuals who has ever condescended to brighten the lexicon of American progress, or who has ever endowed with a wine-like sparkle the annals of the young republic. The eagle and the house, like the ancient pyramid of Khufu, form a shrine of verdant glory. For up to the present they bear a unique distinction which sets them apart in the mind of every student of early Americana, as being the former possession of the only nobleman who ever boasted American patents of nobility, and whose position, though self selected, ever received the sanction of any number of free-born citizens.

These vain mortal trappings were once the property of no ordinary man. Timothy Dexter, erstwhile leather dresser, later merchant, and finally gentleman of Newburyport, once graced this house with his presence, and chose to decree it as his pleasure palace, and to give it all the astounding complexity and genial breadth and generosity of his own imagination, until it blossomed like a weird Versailles

in the midst of a staid and godly New England seaport town, and became a source of wonder which has yet to perish. The eagle is the one remaining architectural embellishment, not of a plain free-born citizen, but of Lord Timothy Dexter, who knew his own worth so well that he described himself frankly where all the world could see as "First in the East, First in the West, and the Greatest Philosopher of all the Known World." *

There is hardly a more outrageous character in all our social phenomena than this untrammelled individual. There is such a quality of abandon in all his ventures and such a disregard of binding fact and regal defiance of the impossible that he has become more than a legend in a time which is almost too busy for folklore. There is today a horrid irony in his laughing shadow. Beyond all the world-shaking serious events of his generation, his achievements stand alone, and transcend the genuine and for-

* This resounding clause has come down traditionally in two distinct forms. One is the complete rounded period used above. The other, printed beside an engraving of our philosopher, which appeared in 1805, is more specific. Instead of "Greatest Philosopher in all the Known World" we find "In the Western World" substituted. Though this is slightly more modest, both are splendid, and the reader may take his choice.

gotten works of other New England traders, until his whole career reflects the highly seasoned opulence of New England shipping. From Maine to California a scattered army of his followers still remembers that Dexter was the man who shipped warming pans to the Indies, who sent a consignment of coal to Newcastle in the teeth of the proverb, and even, by repute, mittens to the Caribbean sea. No stories of Yankee traders' tricks from other ports have ever laid him low. Before the deeds of Dexter they shrivel to insipidity, and leave him the undisputed prince, the quintessence of all the gamblers of the sea. No ordinary muse can be invoked to conjure Dexter back.

As one encounters the contemptuous allusions to this very peculiar merchant, it is hard to suppress bewilderment, for about his head there rests a halo of old dispute. Certain aspects of his life make it incredible that he was left at large, and others assume the impossibility of gigantic gossip. Yet he lived hardly more than a century back. Furthermore in spite of the eccentric rein he gave his fancy he contrived to look after himself in one of the shrewdest and most sophisticated communities then

upon the continent—starting with nothing, accumulating a fortune and leaving it wisely, in a manner which a professional philosopher might envy. Out of the mists of time his figure emerges, partly as a grotesque of Poor Richard, and partly a horrid object of unleashed egotism, and partly—partly something which in all seriousness has a grandeur, like a wild and unformed thought, an unsubstantial iridescent bubble from the infinite, which blows beyond our reach.

It is hard to know where to start, or which one of the stellar galaxy of his literary or commercial works to select which will best throw him into relief. For to understand the vast, vaulted and echoing reaches of the mind of such a man, to pen a truly moral biography, which will be a matter of use and inspiration to aspiring readers, hopeful of touching the mantle of success, to achieve any such high, useful and instructive ideals, it is necessary to breathe life into yellow paper. In the case of Dexter's pyrotechnic burst, we must go further still, back almost to the time when Chippendale was nouveau riche. It is necessary to refill a sea of punch bowls, and to recall whole armies of dead bottles. It is

necessary to erase all present means of locomotion, and to return to horse and sail, and to reconstruct a leisure and a boisterous luxury which is gone forever. It is essential to strain the imagination to a point of believing that position in America was hereditary and deserved a pull of the forelock from the lowly. One must actually envisage a time when servants could be obtained for their board and keep, or at worst for a dollar or so a month, when a wilderness full of Indians was not very far away, when leather breeches were still worn, and when culture was dispensed exclusively and scantily along the Eastern Seaboard. In short, to reach the humbler beginnings of Timothy Dexter, we must return to the beginnings of the United Colonies and follow them in the hopeful light of our hero's understanding.

Yet, curiously enough, human nature was no different then in spite of our subsequent upward progress. The human diamond was apt to be less cut and polished but nothing more. Nor were the ways of destiny either easier or more difficult to comprehend. They had already made the North American continent a place of opportunity where poor became accidentally rich. The golden rod of fortune already

hovered with its present uncertainty over the American homestead, ready to touch the most unlikely candidates of every generation. As early as 1747 this perpetual uncertainty of our social structure was in full sway in its cycle of shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves. Timothy Dexter was born that year in Malden, Massachusetts, of poor but honest parents.

Dexter himself was under no illusions regarding the importance of this event, and has left to posterity an account of certain heavenly phenomena indicating a brilliant future.

"I was born when grat powers Rouled—I was borne in 1747, Janeuarey 22; on this day, in the morning A grat snow storme—the sines in the seventh house wives; mars Came fored—Joupeter stud by holding the Candel—I was to be one grat man."

Like Shakespeare's and that of many another whose name has been used freely, and whose footsteps are firmly embedded on the sands of time, Dexter's youth is shadowed in obscurity. Indeed there is hardly a light upon his early manhood, until he rose out of middle age, full fledged, like the Phoenix, to take his place; and at best most is conjecture. It

is safe to say his family was poor, since they were simple folk, sprung from the stock of early settlers, and gaining their existence in a bleak climate upon a rocky soil. And they must have been honest for three reasons—first because honesty was a part of the rigorous life of ancient Malden as in every other small town of New England, secondly because not even the most envious or carping of Timothy Dexter's detractors but admitted a probity in his most peculiar dealings which could hardly be derived from any but the most unswerving tenets of Puritan education; and lastly because the Dexters, whose family tree Lord Dexter adorns, like an exotic orchid out of place among solider branches, have been since the beginning a family of weight and credit in every community where they have resided, solid, industrious, and often distinguished.

Many biographers and students of the unusual, including Samuel Alonzo Knapp, who wrote the first biography of Daniel Webster, and also prodded Dexter with his pen,* and William C. Todd, who has

* "The Life of Lord Timothy Dexter" (1838). This is the only biography of our hero which is in the least extensive, and this too is very short but highly moral. It is well to remember the title, as it will be frequently used for reference.

blown upon Dexter the chill breath of disbelief, are in contradiction regarding the early trend of Dexter's life. Nevertheless there is little real doubt. Lord Dexter's own unerring forefinger points through the maze, and his own writing exists to tell the story. From this may be gleaned an incontrovertible fact that sounds an encouraging note to anyone who feels that a lack of culture interferes with upward progress. The education of this Malden youth was almost negligible, and the embellishments he later gave his mind were his own and not others', or drawn, as he loved to say—from nature. Schools were less common in Malden than now, and the demands of living put every member of the family to work. At some period between Dexter's birth and his ninth year he probably spent a short time beneath the roof of the village school, but it was very short. From the facts on hand it was long enough only to enable Dexter to cast up figures, to wade haltingly through a New England Primer, and to write in a fashion entirely free from orthographic laws, and as yet altogether unsurpassed. Nevertheless these slender intellectual gifts are in direct contradiction to scholars who favor deep draughts at the Pierian

Spring. This abstinence of young Dexter's was undoubtedly enforced by circumstances beyond him, since it is nearly his only abstinence from beverages discernible, but it was fortunate for Dexter, perhaps the first of his good fortune. His soaring spirit was given a full rein. It was allowed to grow unwarped and untrammelled by scholastic awe. A year more or two years of slavish penmanship, and the birch rod and the horn book might have forced him permanently into the ranks of mediocrity, and have tainted him with that discipline of intellectual fear, which keeps the rest of us from following his course.

Long afterwards, seated on the pinnacle he had attained solely through his own exertion, when he was nearing the end of his days, Dexter found himself, fortunately for his admirers, in the retrospective mood of elders whose work is done. When Malden was nearly forgotten, Lord Dexter took his golden pen in hand—one of his last acquisitions, and compressed his early life into a few pithy lines, which contain all the expansiveness, not to mention the peculiarity of his character.

"1755 in may 9 Day my father put me with a farmer in malden in which I stayed six years and six

months then to Chalston I stayed Leven months at Dressin of skins for briches & glovs—then went to boston there stayed till I was free—in fourteene days I went to Newbury Port with A bondel in my hand to A place all noue to me—I had sold my free Dom sout * at the vandours—five shillings A yard starling in Roum of a guinea Cloth—I was angry—this money I began with Eight Dolors & 20 sents—I had faith by reading A book—I was to have this world's goods and be Come grate and be Amonkest grat men in the East and to give lite to the blind wharein my fellow mortels have bin Douped for many thousand years with untrouth." †

This paragraph, if it can be called such, is more than a statement of fact. In a measure it is this august individual himself, with a confidence in a destiny which from the time of his youth never forsook him, and it lays bare to anyone who is not overcome by the array of capitals and phonetics, not only his flaring audacity and shrewdness, but finally his mysticism.

* Free Dom sout—meaning freedom suit. Clothes once commonly given a young man completing his apprenticeship.

† It was Dexter's habit to use almost no punctuation. In quoting him, however, we will hereafter commit the vandalism of adding

In all the more ambitious Dexterian pronouncements startled readers have frequently sought for elusive truth and have hoped that time would bring it forth. And now, though followers of Dexter have waited over a century for "lite," this "lite" still is tantalizingly hid, sometimes almost grasped but never wholly, until the feebler and less hopeful believe it has gone beyond repair. In perfect accord with the faith which Dexter derived from this potent though vanished book, Dexter did have this world's goods, nor was "grateness" denied him, but somehow in the rush of the day's affairs, that unavoidable pressure which rests on all the "grate" has cut us off from his most precious legacy. Where is the "lite" which was to dazzle his fellow "mortels?" Is it there, or is it possible that in this one particular this sage did not read his book aright? It is only left for posterity to guess when it is guessing time.

Back in the middle of seventeen hundred, society had its own way of shifting its burdens from a poor man's shoulders. When a boy was able to work, and

occasional commas, semicolons and dashes, in order to supply a more ready sense at the risk of spoiling form. The curious reader may be gratified, if he wishes, by a liberal specimen of unpunctuated Dexterian prose, which he will find in the appendix of this volume.

could not be supported at home, he was ordinarily "made over" to a neighbor, who profited by his usefulness, and at the same time paid his keep, and kept him to the mark by rigorous discipline. From his ninth year to his fifteenth, Timothy Dexter led the back-bending life of a Malden farm under this system of shifted responsibility, until his muscles were so inured to toil that he could enter the still severer field of trade apprenticeship. We may add that the life of an apprentice was no joke, but a crisis of life on the contrary, fit to make or break a boy whom hard circumstance led to this ancient vocational training. In Charlestown and Boston, society held Dexter to his self-imposed serfdom of learning a trade, fetching and carrying, shouldering reeking hides and staining his hands with tannin, working with all the self denial and energy which a Puritan tradesman could elicit from his help, and living on the leavings of his master's table. In that period and for years later, the newsprints contained many curious notices which show the bitter lot of lowly youth. They are the advertisements of irate masters whose apprentices have left them, many of which exhibit a spleen that gives adequate reason for this rash step.

"An Old Pelt Reward" we discover a printer writing at a later time, but in no new spirit, "Run away a few days since an apprentice boy named Barnabas Redman, about 19½ years old, an ill-looking fellow of a forbidding countenance, clumsy in his address and deportment of a morose aspect, much pitted with small pox, bandy legged and ill bred, having had his origin in the American Army. Whoever will deliver said runaway to the subscriber in Elizabeth town shall have the above reward."

This scant offer for genuine trouble may have been commensurate with the worth of poor Barnabas. Barnabas may have been fit to arouse the ire of anyone, and for all we know young Timothy's master was more forbearing and later a patriot who cast no aspersions on his nation's fighting forces. Nevertheless we have a painful reminiscence from Dexter's pen that hints of tears and shadows.

"mister printer," he once wrote, "my fortin has bin hard very hard that is I have had hard Noks on my head 4 difrent times from A boy to this Day twice taken up for dead two beatings."

The normal reactions of life are nearly as certain as those of physics. Throw a body forcibly down-

wards, and it will rebound upward to an extent commensurate only with its resilience. Plunged prematurely into labor, hustled into the depth of a society where caste was no idle name, forced into a maze of "glovs" and leather "briches," the result, though slow in coming, was immense. It was the very jolting which was needed to overcome the commonplace of human inertia. There was a pause, the suspended motion of a body encountering a solid obstruction, and Dexter bounced upward to the stars of romance, so forcibly and far that his memory bounces still, elusive, uncaptured, forever free from the taint of low beginnings.

In those days, when diplomas and certificates were scarcer, there existed an honored English custom of giving a young man successfully terminating his tradesman's apprenticeship a more tangible and useful evidence of graduation. It took the form of a bright new suit of clothes, such as nature gives the worm when he emerges from the chrysalis into the outer air. Thus the boy could start life by discarding the eroded garb of the shop, and put on a brave appearance as he began to make his way. Timothy's employer, clearly enough, followed this good old

custom, and, either from native generosity, or from genuine desire to reward a useful artisan, laid himself to his duty with a lavish hand. This garment, probably a jacket and small breeches is what Lord Dexter has termed his "free Dom sout." It was made of "guinea cloth" and must surely have been a confection to brighten a poor boy's eye, and, instead of a useful covering, it might well have been a temptation to gross extravagance and a guide to the primrose path. It was Timothy's sterling quality which made it neither. The free Dom sout was destined to be one of those points in life, small in themselves, but great in consequence, which separate the "grate" from common "mortels," and the more knowing ones may descry behind it the first move of the crafty player before the wheel of destiny.

Other boys who delighted in the present, and forgot the tomorrow, would have worn this badge of emancipation till holes appeared in the 'briches,' but not a man of genius and much less a Dexter. In spite of his youth he fully understood that cold cash was better than any garment, and thus he took it to the "vandours" while it was fresh and new. Though most of the ensuing painful scene is omitted, anyone

who has taken any "sout" whatever to a modern "vandour" may supply the gaps. We do not know the vendor's race, but from the transaction we may hazard a safe guess, and even conclude that vendors then were the fully developed species, who still mete out Dexter's chill reception. The guinea cloth fetched but five shillings a yard "starling," and evoked our hero's natural comment. "I was angry," Dexter said quite frankly, and well he might have been, for he was placed for once in his life at disadvantage in a trade, and felt the honest fury we all know who have sold our "souts." For once the fire of his eloquence fell flat, and he took his pittance like a common man, and left in his old clothes with his "bondel" in his hand.

We can never tell what premonition took him up the coast to Newburyport. New England life was so very different then, so much fresher and more vital, and in no measure filled with the stiff quaintness which time has left, that all motives are hard to translate. New England then was the apple of America and not the core. It had not as yet sent its growing population to settle a wilderness in the west. It abounded with a restive, pent up energy

which found its outlet on the sea and drew further sustenance from its own sparse soil. It was a time of restive change. Its first industries, its mills and shipyards were already beginning to gain a foothold. It is difficult in the light of the present, when all the youth who can are leaving the confines of Newburyport, to understand how Dexter should have chosen this somnolent and half forgotten town as a hustling growing place that was worthy of his works. Yet in 1769 Newburyport was all of that and more, an ideal place for a mechanic to make a living. Men who had begun by tilling the fields of Newbury were already living in Newburyport with comfortable establishments of their own. The next thirty years were to see its population rise to six thousand, and this seemingly insignificant number meant in the America of that time a community which verged on urban proportions. The antiquated low studded buildings of the late sixteen and early seventeen hundreds were to give way to square austerely beautiful mansions with gracious arched doorways and broad windows, houses which stood in ordered rows, each overlooking its lawns and gardens. Newburyport's roads and lanes were to take the name of

streets, and along the waterfront wharves in increasing numbers were to jut into the tides of the Merrimack River, which flowed over its bar to join the sea, just beyond the town limits. Warehouses and business houses were to change produce from the fishing grounds and the back country into solid wealth, and the privateering of the revolution was soon to augment the humdrum business of shipbuilding and carrying with a speed so astonishing that at least one resident is known to have exclaimed piously, "Lord, stay thy hand. Thy servant hath enough." *

Out of this prosperity a society was to spring, so free handed, cosmopolitan, and accomplished as to be considered by observers the best north of Washington, and by others inferior to none on the continent. Silver was to glitter between rows of decanters on broad sideboards, and, to the horror of many, rare wines by the hundreds of gallons were to fill the cellars of the wealthy, and the arts and industries of polite living were to bloom with a transient grace

* This rash speech is attributed in local history to Joseph Marquand. This gentleman being the author's great-great-grandfather, enables the present writer to add that the prayer was quickly answered by fire and loss at sea. Its answer, alas, did not end there, but continues with more or less force even to the present generation!

into ornaments now captured by antique shops and striven for at auctions. In short, in 1769, when young Dexter made his way along the dusty stage road through Salem over to Beverly, and through the gently rolling pasture and ploughed lands of Ipswich and Rowley, and down toward the salt marshes of the River Parker, Newburyport, though forty miles and more from Boston, was well worth a hard day's journey. Dexter approached a land of plenty where the world's goods are more easily obtainable than now.

Along the road he went with his "bondel" in his hand into the ancient town of Newbury where the first settlers had landed—alone with his vaulted thoughts, and probably he was scarcely noticed, and surely no one knew that one of the "grate" was on the march. Possibly, despite his highest hopes and his magic book, Dexter himself never guessed that day that a time would come when he would roll back on that very Boston road in his own coach with his own exquisitely matched, silver-bitted horses, not an artisan with tan stain on his fingers, but a philanthropist and a philosopher pillowed in soft cushions. Beyond the lower green of Newbury and beyond a

scattering of farm-houses, whose owners tilled their original family grants, as many of their descendants still do, the road veered slightly to the left, and ascended a gentle slope, from whence, on the right hand fields and orchards declined gradually downwards to a plain of golden marshes with cocks of hay raised on stakes above the tide. Further still the marshes ended at a long low line of sand hills, where an island of dunes, still known as Plum Island, raised a barrier to the sea, and from that distance it also shone like gold beneath the sun. It was a symbolic sight, fit to spur a great man's mind to action, for even now, on any clear afternoon Plum Island continues to give the appearance of a heap of treasure, washed to land by a nautical god of plenty that all may seize their fill. A gradual rise of ground ahead marked the beginning of a glacial ridge that parallels the Merrimack, and raises the port above the river damp, affording as well a view of south, north, and east. This ridge cut off for the moment the broad metallic strip of river, and that golden island's end, but Dexter could already see the town which was to reflect his lustre. The houses were becoming thicker, the road was deeper worn

with wheel ruts and the hoof prints of horses, cows and oxen. A church spire appeared ahead of him, high against a rough carpet of wooded hills to the northward with a rooster as a weather vane, gold like the island sand, and very new. He was walking down the road which later was to be called High Street toward the center of the town, and in a short while he was in the midst of the place that was all "noue" to him. A thoroughfare turned sharply to his right, straight towards the river. The masts of shipping rose above a cluster of wooden houses, which had the uncompromising blankness of new structures, for most of what he saw was new and hardly softened by the weather. The very trees were saplings that hardly rose above the roofs, and the paint was a glaring white or light yellow, and the brick chimneys had a blatant freshness. It must, in many ways, have been more like a frontier village than a venerable place, but at the time of Dexter's arrival Newburyport was already gaining a local reputation as a Babylon of effete luxury, and rustics gazed soberly at the golden rooster, and at sophisticated mariners drinking at the tavern.

As Franklin had walked into Philadelphia not so

long before with two loaves of bread beneath his arm, so this rising exponent of New England thought made his way down the central street of Newburyport—Fish Street, it was called in those days, before patriotic ardor changed it to State—His "bondel" was in his hand, clasped in a grip which let few possessions go, and his available assets of eight dollars and twenty cents, or their equivalent in British coinage, were liquid on his person. Through the scenes of his coming triumph walked young Dexter in that invisible cloak which hides genius, and adds another wonder to the world. There could have been nothing in a casual glance at him to indicate that a personage was arriving, little or nothing to raise him from the rank and file of mechanics of Massachusetts Bay. Nevertheless, young as he was, he could not have gone wholly unnoticed, judging by what evidence is left. A print of Dexter still exists, done from the life when he was somewhat past middle age, but from it we may reconstruct the young man who was father to the old.

Any Newburyport inhabitant in 1769 who obeyed a common impulse to stare at a stranger must have

beheld a youth in his early twenties, neither tall nor short but muscular and horny handed, walking from the direction of Boston, soiled with the dust of travel. The accurate indication of social position which clothes in those days gave the man betrayed his lowly if honorable station, and probably as well his actual calling. For since he wore his old clothes, it is hardly to be supposed that no trace or odor of tanner's stain remained upon his breeches and pewter buckled shoes. Beneath the curving brim of the period's conventional tricornered hat, Dexter's sharp and rather beady eyes peered curiously ahead, shrewdly penetrating, yet also humorous and kindly. The young man's face was in general one of those lean specimens of visage common in the streets of Boston and points northward, not wholly ugly and drolly keen and sensitively moulded. A broad well-set chin, and a long nose that was sharp and straight, were indications of his character, which fate had relieved wholly of pedantic conscientiousness by the presence of an ample mouth, set in perpetual readiness to smile or mock. Upon closer examination it was a remarkable face, not only shrewd, but wild, and restive and gay, a visage as peculiar in itself and

as difficult to judge as the individual to whom the gods vouchsafed it. In short, the longer one looked, the more it seemed to be a sportive coin from nature's mint, not to be matched again.

Unheralded, as yet unsung, and still worse unsuspected, the greatest of the "grate" walked down the street, alone as he must be always. He had ended the vicissitudes of his first journey, and with it his early youth. He was safe in Newburyport to pillage the fruits of Hesperides, and to give in turn a yeast-like leaven to his age and generation, which makes a merry echo still, and still awakes a vain desire to hear his laughter.

As Dexter first saw Newburyport

CHAPTER II

In which Dexter Acquires an efficient Wife, four Stepchildren, two Children of his own, a Housekeeper, and finally a Fortune.

AS great oaks are said to grow from the proverbially little acorn, and as the truest worth is but gradually appreciated, so it was with Dexter, and thus we must tarry yet a while longer upon a momentous threshold. Young Dexter has an unfortunate way of vanishing in his earlier career. He came into Newburyport with his bundle and his eight dollars and twenty cents, and again walked into an obscurity from whence it is a distinct drain on the imagination to draw him. Vital statistics, a single advertisement, and sadly enough only a few of Dexter's words, and these much enervated by editing, are all we have left to indicate his first steps upward.

Dexter proved himself to be unshaken by his novel environment and by the low thunder of rebellion

which was beginning to stir about him. He immediately turned to his arduously acquired trade with remarkably gratifying results. In fact, these results were so extraordinarily gratifying that he felt himself able in the short space of a few months to assume a man's full burden and not a little over. This limited time was all that was necessary, besides putting him in a healthy business way, to convince one member of the community at least, either of his potential capacity, or the perpetual pleasure of his personality, or both. In consequence, toward the end of May, 1770, Timothy Dexter cast aside his bachelorhood, and married a widow by the name of Elizabeth Frothingham, already the mother of four children, who remained to the end of Dexter's days, probably his startled and certainly his careworn consort.

This transaction before the altar, bringing with it so many hostages to fortune, appears as devoid of reason as his later and more famous acts, yet, like these, a fine vein of wisdom ran through it. In this step, as in the selling of his freedom suit, Dexter was at his best, not the feather-brained romanticist, but the clear-eyed man of business. It is safe to

concede that Madam Frothingham never truly envisaged the bargain she was making, until it burst upon her later like a divine clap of thunder, but research makes it evident that Dexter made a general's estimate of all the future. Dexter already was wise enough to play the game of marriage with loaded dice.

Other young men of twenty-four in the first green promise of New England spring have allowed a poet's rein to lead them on to subsequent regrets, but again Dexter was no ordinary man. With quick decision he turned from the fresher but giggling and empty-headed girls at Sunday meeting to safety and to comfort. Elizabeth Frothingham may have combined comeliness with her other attractions. In view of Dexter's later predilections more than probably she possessed her measure of beauty, but this was not all. Mrs. Frothingham had gained already the pilot's eye for the rocks and shoals of connubial bliss. Like other good housewives of that virtuous age, her hands were already somewhat hardened to the vicissitudes of home making, for this process was then completely unrelieved by modern labor saving devices. Whatever may have been her more

transient charms, our scattered record informs us that the future Mrs. Dexter was known to her contemporaries, not only for a certain shortness of temper, but for a native dexterity at patching breeches. This is a small sidelight on her character, but we cannot regard it lightly. Mrs. Dexter must have been a patcher of breeches extraordinary, a heroine among heroic seamstresses, to have her prowess in any way remarked, for in that virtuous period every woman was a seamstress—every woman wielded her own needle from the halting sampler stage of girlhood onward to the grave. This good lady, moreover, possessed one other important virtue, and if it is the last in our catalogue, a lean and hard worked man like Dexter knew its value. The late Mr. Frothingham, we hear, had left his wife in 'good circumstances.' Considering also that he had left her four small children, the circumstances cannot have been over-bright, but all sums of money have a relative value, depending on who may touch them, and when. There comes a time to nearly all of us when money assumes the proportion of a golden mountain, magnified by a wistful retina, and with our hero we must leave it so. Dexter, with all his transcendant

powers, had the amiable weaknesses of the world, which finds in gold a very solid comfort.

Still his development was slow. After his comfortable marriage, he and his able wife started on an unpretentious career, but little different from any worker's family. Dexter's brain still was dormant in a homely leather wrapping, and he still was content, or possibly constrained, to ply the leather dresser's trade. He set to work on a host of gloves and an army of leather breeches. Rumor even has it that he practiced the finer arts of his profession, and cured skins after the manner of the Levant, making what is now known as Morocco leather, but of this we cannot be sure. At all events the Dexters, to quote one of their biographers, "went on, good, quiet, tidy, honest folks, blessed with children to labor for, as well as themselves." This is very true. In addition to four stepchildren, a son, Samuel, was born to the Dexters in 1772, who was always a doubtful blessing, and a daughter, Nancy, of whom more anon, in 1776.

Down by the Merrimack River Dexter dwelt and worked in a house which was owned by his wife. In front of the door he hung a glove of wood to signify

his trade, as was the custom then, when reading was not a universal accomplishment. In the basement Timothy kept his shop, and Mrs. Dexter exhibited her practical nature by conducting a huckster's business on the same premises. If one has the curiosity to stand now on the site of that vanished place, it is difficult to believe that an expansive man could have lived and worked there twenty years, and still have kept his faith in a book he had read once as a boy. Dexter's corner fronts today a quiet small-town street, where a love of fame, however poignant, should by rights perish in the reek of hides and the daily haggle of a tradesman's life, but things were different then. A single property alone remains to the environment, a single reminescent aura is left it, and that is all. It is a smell of salt water which reaches there, a breath of the sea, when the wind blows right; and that hint of the sea is always fresh, always poignant, always new. The sea is out there still, the sea which built the houses of that half-forgotten port, which once tinged all the life, and brought breadth and wealth and worldly wisdom.

When Timothy Dexter worked at his hides close to the river bank, the sea was nearer than it is today.

The sea was in the wind, and voice and thought and prayer and epitaph.* Lives and hopes came in with the sea and went out on the swirling tide. From the Sign of the Glove it was less than a minute's walk to the water's edge, and the water was a threshold to El Dorado then. The shipyards were there, very busy places in the early seventies, for the Merrimack was already known as the cradle of well-made ships. On any day clusters of shipping might be seen about the wharves, and sail at the harbor mouth, bound out or back from the Indies, or along the coast.

* Any present-day visitor to the Old Hill Burying Ground in Newburyport may discover several of these maritime epitaphs in verse. One of them, on the stone of Capt. Thomas Clouston, reads as follows:

Happy the Seaman who his Compass knows
And steers to Heaven tho' storm & tempest blows
His Admiral's signal quickly he saw fly,
Which bid his bark to sail beyond the sky.
His sails he trimmed and took his leave of all,
Knowing it right to obey his Admiral's call.

That of Captain Joseph Newman is in better meter:

In Borea's blasts and Neptune's waves,
I was toss'd to and fro.
Now, well escap'd from all their rage,
I anchor here below.
Safely I ride in triumph here,
With many of our fleet;
'Till signal calls of weigh again,
Our Admiral Christ to meet.

Surprisingly small vessels they would seem now, but they had an importance beyond their size. Their masts rose in intricate design above the low warehouses and antiquated waterfront dwellings. Artisans and idlers paused to watch them and discuss their merits. Teams loaded with fish and lumber rattled past Dexter's door.

Great events, glorious times, were already on the march when Dexter began his store. A new undercurrent of excitement was running through more peaceful occupations, and wains loaded with cannon and powder began to make an appearance on the street by the water. The Revolutionary War was beginning, bringing with it the welcome dawn of a new industry—New England privateering. No matter what school histories say, the early colonial struggles were not wholly given to sacrifice.

The Atlantic was filled with unprotected British shipping, which probably did not suspect the long arm of Yankee ingenuity, until it was learned that the General Court of Massachusetts was issuing in wholesale quantities licenses and letters of marque capable of changing the most modest colonial merchant ship into a man-of-war. Any captain who had

one of these papers in his possession could legally attack and seize any vessel whatever which flew the British flag. It hardly took a business man to perceive the possibilities of so liberal a privilege, much less the hard heads of a seagoing population. A figure or two on the debit side of the ledger, and the credit column might be too small to hold the entry. A vessel, old and water-logged, once equipped with a few guns, and a few avaricious hands, might pay her original cost in a day of lucky cruising. In short it was piracy, though legal piracy, with all the lure of that gay and reckless life, combining patriotism with profit in a way which made war a genuine pleasure.

From 1775 onward, moneyed citizens of Newburyport banded together, purchased shares in some likely looking local vessel, manned it with local talent that was ready to risk grape shot for gold, and sat back to watch their work. Again and again they formed these companies. Again and again they watched, while their ships dropped down with the tide, over the bar to sea. Off the coast from a dozen New England ports hundreds of motley vessels were cruising on courses which led to the Indies and even

to the entrance of the British Channel. It was a daring business and a secret business, and much of the record is necessarily lost, but a partial roster of Newburyport privateers is still left, whose names have a peculiar sound befitting their vessels' calling.

There was the Game Cock, a tiny vessel of twenty tons, the Washington, the Yankee Hero, and the Hawk, and the Civil Usage, the Independence, the Satisfaction, the Defiance, the Revenge, the Retaliation, the Thorn, the Sky Rocket, the Success, the Shark, the Hannibal, and the Hornet,—and these were not all. Mingled with such militant titles were others which betokened their owners' softer moods—the Fancy, the Gloriosa, the Hope, and the Virgin, the Peacock, the Friendship, the Betsy, and the Charming Nancy. They swarmed the sea like a flight of seven year locusts, and the days of most of them were as short and hazardous as this obiquitous insect's life. Their tonnage, resounding names and all, was nearly comparable to a fleet of modern fishing smacks, but while they lasted, they did their work. Almost past Dexter's door they went, and Dexter could see what they brought back, stuff worth a million freedom "souts" and armies of comfortable

widows. Gaping, cheering crowds on the wharves beheld strange ships float in, now singly, now two or three together. Men of moderate means were growing rich over night. Houses were being filled with British silver service and linen and hangings. It was a time when anything might happen. The recklessness, the folly, the intoxication of a successful mining town surged up and joined oddly with Puritan tradition, like the oil and vinegar in a noble salad dressing.

Captain John O'Brien captured three brigs, a ship, and a schooner the very first time he cast loose in a ship with guns. Captain William Russell, aboard the General Ward, took only a light swivel and sixteen men to sea, but he brought in a schooner and two brigs. The Hawk sent back an English merchantman from Oporto, loaded with wine and carrying a large sum of currency, and these were only random examples of what the tides brought in. In a large brick house on State Street, furnished in the most modern manner and tended by negro servants in livery, there lived Nathaniel Tracy, Esq., young, opulent, and travelled. Nathaniel Tracy and his partner Jonathan Jackson were the shining lights of

the hour, the heaviest of the plungers in the trade. The vessels of their firm alone captured one hundred and twenty sail before their course was run, which brought with their cargoes three million nine hundred and fifty thousand dollars gross!

The immense and easily acquired sums of money now pouring in were not confined to ship-owners. Suddenly everyone grew rich who touched a lucky ship, the captains, the crews down to the cabin boys —everyone was enveloped in a blanket of money. Common mariners reeled past Dexter's shop with gold jingling in their pockets, and traders became accustomed to the ring of gold in their tills. It was easy come and easy go—but what of Dexter then?

He was on the sidelines still. His light was still beneath a bushel, but dimly, behind those rollicking booming days, we can perceive hints of an unparalleled mind reaching toward rare things, restlessly, erratically. In the stormy days of April, 1776, Dexter, instead of joining the patriots in arms, utilized the current newsprint for an advertisement which shows that he was trying. At the Sign of the Glove he offered for sale "Good Deer Sheep and Moose skins. Likewise Deer Sheep and Moose Skin

Breeches, and a quantity of good Blubber." In the single word "blubber" the spirit of a bound Prometheus leaps fitfully from the yellowed paper. Though Dexter was getting on in years, his eye was on his ingrown light. Already he was groping beyond his trade for other Merchandise, and already his mind was on higher things. In the town election of the same year, he was elevated to an office, which went admirably with his trade, a town office now defunct, entitled Informer of Deer. The duties of this position could not have been onerous, since they called for the enforcement of the existing game law in a thickly settled community. It was a sinecure of an office, but an office still, and ample evidence that the voters, with rare acumen, recognized a stranger's capacity. Gratifyingly enough, they continued to recognize it, for year after year Dexter's name continued on the roster. Year after year he preserved deer in life, as efficiently as he preserved their skins in death, until the cares of wealth began to claim him. It is a curious thing, but even now reports come in that deer still make their appearance in the confines of Newburyport, and now and then partake of farmers' crops, so nonchalantly

that one might think they still retain a grateful memory.*

In the midst of growing responsibilities, both of a civic and family character, our hero exhibited to the world another side of his embracing nature. As the keyword "blubber" shows the beginning of Dexter, the Merchant, as Informer of Deer is the birth of Dexter, the Statesman, there is also gratifying evidence that Dexter found time to draw away from worldly trumpery and to reveal Dexter, the Philosopher, the inception of the Thinker and the Scanner of the Soul.

"Furthermore," Dexter wrote in the Impartial Herald of 1795, "if I am not converted, there is not anyone converted as I think. I have been more than twenty years converted (I am not joking about it) ever since I got me a housekeeper." †

* Mrs. E. Vale Smith in her History of Newburyport, published in 1854, takes a disappointing view of this whole office. "No deer," she says, "were ever known to have been seen in Newburyport after its incorporation." Nevertheless, there was always a possibility that a deer *might* be seen at any time. There have been many since.

† Even in 1802 we find Timothy Dexter mentioning this conversion. "one thing fourder," he remarks, "I have bin convarted upwards 30 years, quite Ressned for the day, the grat day; I wish the preasts Node as much as I think I do." . . . Sadly enough the housekeeper he then had seems to have possessed none of the strong convictions of

The twenty years of which he speaks brings us back to the Sign of the Glove, and to the turbulent years when the privateers were sailing, and once more we can reconstruct a picture from those scanty words. In a period of deep religious convictions, when churches were the root of intellectual life, it is natural that Dexter should undergo conversion. Each Sunday the building of the First Religious society on Market Square, and the aristocratic Anglican church of St. Paul were filled with congregations, harking to the thunder of pulpit eloquence. The sonorous language of the Old Testament was not for Sunday reading only, but was a companion for every man's leisure moments, which echoed across parishioners' thoughts from hour to hour, and was not to be escaped. The tolling of the church bells, instead of being musical hints to conscience, were strident commands which were obeyed with stern alacrity, and after several hours upon hard pew seats in an unheated building the inevitable sacrifice of comforts of the body correspondingly aided the spirit to triumph. It was hard, if not impossible, to leave

this former housekeeper, for we find Dexter adding: "my hous keeper is in the dark wos then bad, Crasey to be saved." The full passage appears in Dexter's "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones."

these places of worship without bringing also a sense of righteousness and achievement. In the North Congregational Church, the stern and calvinistic Dr. Samuel Spring denied even the relaxation of music. Once upon a time, we are told, the choir leader of this religious body produced a pitch pipe to give the singers the proper note, but only once. Upon perceiving the instrument, and on hearing the sound it gave forth, "the Doctor sprang to his feet, his long curls which lay upon his shoulders ruffled by the rapidity of his movements and shouted: 'put away that Babylonish pipe!' "

"I remember well," says our same informant,* speaking of a time only a little later, "the great turmoil made when Mr. Jacob Perkins offered to build at his own cost a furnace he had invented which would keep the temperature of the church at 60 degrees, the windows being made tight (for they kept up a terrible rattle in an easterly storm). This was debated long and eagerly. Those who went for warmth were denied as having any vitality of piety" and the offer was refused.

* These anecdotes are included in the reminiscences of an old gentleman which appeared in the *Newburyport Herald* in the middle eighteen hundreds.

"I used to gaze," this same reminiscent old gentleman continues, "with deep interest at two poor members of the old North Church, who, I was told, were so entirely lost in the will of God that they were willing to be lost if their damnation would better promote the Glory of God. . . . They were tallow chandlers and godly men."

If tallow chandlers were so swayed by fervor, a worker in an allied trade would naturally catch the contagion. It is only odd that Dexter seems to have resisted with a troubled mind. "I am not joking about it," we discover our hero saying, as though skeptics in the community still doubted his pietic state, and again there comes another qualifying clause which makes us knit our brows. "Twenty years converted," Dexter asserts, "ever since I got me a housekeeper." His wife could not do it. He needed both a wife and a housekeeper to incline him toward spiritual grace.

We do not know the name of this admirable woman* who injected her personality into the Dexter household. She can only be judged by indirec-

* We can, however, hazard a guess. One of the two ships that Dexter is known to have owned later is called the *Mehitabel.*

tion, but her activity and force of character were undoubtedly beyond the average. She did her holy work and household work so well that she left an indelible impression on Dexter's mind, not to be effaced by later wealth. She was an ideal for which this philosopher often sought an equal but never with success. Again and again Dexter advertised for such another, and we can read her virtues between the lines. There is no wonder her memory lingered when we scan the catalogue of achievements she drew from her employer.

"Wanted Direct," Dexter advertised in the Impartial Herald at a later period, when he could get nearly everything he wanted, "A very good Housekeeper—the age not less than 25, nor more than 35, with a good mind. I take myself to be a converted man and full of love. I want a good housekeeper, fully converted—a cook fit for my house, of a good constitution, so as to grace the house well and a very sensible person—not handsome but comely, willing to oblige by night or day. As I am very nervous, if she please me well, she will be handsomely paid as much as she can be asked in reason. She must take good care of the house at *one dollar* a week—must

not go out nights—she must go to meeting and delight in doing good at home where she has her pay and good living. She must look well to my interest —and if she does well, at my decease, she will have a *noble sum of money to buy her a husband*."

Such princely inducements measure the strength of his desire, and show where his thoughts were running. He was back when he lived close beside the river, when he was truly happy. Harassed by new cares, he conjured up lost hours of peace, when a glove of wood swung in the east wind before his door, when his son Sam and his daughter Nancy were giving him no trouble, and of an evening trotted happily to bed. He could see again old visions of domestic peace, often so transient and yet so dear to every man—Mrs. Dexter silent with her needle and her patches, a table of pine as white as lye could make it, covered with good pewter which shone comfortably in the light of goodly tallow candles, a can where he could reach it in comfort, filled with good ale from the brewery up the street, or possibly with a still more potent local product distilled from molasses, and he could see himself young again, and unjaded—at rest after a day of leather. And over

all this scene, making it perfect, and ever on the watch to maintain its perfection was this ministering wonder of the past, this paragon of housekeepers, healthy, not handsome, but comely, and delighting in doing good, in short, a sensible person who did not go out of nights. With all these graces to surround him, who can wonder that his mind turned to higher things, never wholly to leave them, and that he listened to this superlative missionary, who conducted his soul to peace. Once, long after, when he lived in state in a palace of his own, a minister called upon him, and offered to make a prayer, and when the prayer was over, Dexter turned solemnly to his son, Sam.

"Sam," said Dexter, "wasn't that a d—n'd good prayer?"

Could it be that he was thinking of that past and pleasant time? That for a little while, alas too short, he was in a safe harbor, sheltered from the tempest of his restlessness? For a little while, again too short, he could pause, and allow ambition's waves to beat unheeded, content with little things, until the winds of life finally pulled him from his moorings to strand him in a coast of gold.

The wind was veering strangely enough for hundreds of puzzled men in the next few years, and small seaports all along the coast were in for a siege of stormy weather, an inevitable visitation, as anyone could see who was familiar with the freaks of unfounded prosperity. It was all too good to last, that early privateering period; its very character called inevitably for drastic reaction. As the Revolutionary War progressed, the sudden and unprecedented influx of lucre into Yankee hands reached an abrupt and startling termination. The appearance of an efficient British fleet off the coast abetted by flotillas of British privateers, raised havoc with the motley, hastily-improvised and amateur navy of New England, and, in fact, brought shipping on the Massachusetts coast close to annihilation. The usual optimistic class of people who think that a shower of gold will never end gradually became aware that a thick pall of gloom had descended not only on Boston, Salem and Newburyport, but on every coastal community which depended on the sea.

It has been said that several local merchants, who had established a lucrative pre-war trade with the West Indies and other points, made gains equal to

their lost profits through judicious privateering, but their gains must have been nothing, compared to the spectacular losses that confronted others. As the war progressed, faces of the most prosperous citizens assumed set, preoccupied expressions, as they stared seaward from the upper windows of their dwellings, or waited for the latest post. And those who were not too heavily committed began hastily to withdraw their capital in the hope of a better time, a time which began to seem very distant. When hostilities finally ceased, loungers on the Merrimack wharves were greeted with the chill sight of a virtually empty harbor, and scattered craft, leaking or sodden from disuse, or smashed by solid shot.

Without delving far into painful details, the vicissitudes of our same Nathaniel Tracy offer an appalling example of what happened in a lesser way to others. During the war this gallant and speculative gentleman was the principal owner of twenty-four cruising ships, which mounted 340 guns and carried 2,800 men. Twenty-three of these ships were lost by the time that peace was signed, and that was not all, in fact the lesser of his bad fortunes. During the same period this merchant was

chief owner of one hundred and ten merchant vessels, which were valued with their cargoes at $2,733,300. Whatever one may say of the Newburyport of present times, it once did things on a gallant scale. Thirteen of these vessels were all that Tracy ended with. The rest were lost or captured by the enemy. Trade was at a standstill, markets were closed, securities were falling, and government itself was proceeding in a tottering way, wracked with internal dissension. It was fortunate that Dexter was converted, for the ensuing years of post-war adjustment demanded an ardent faith in human nature and in heaven.

To quote from Samuel Eliot Morrison's "The Maritime History of Massachusetts," there had arrived "the worst economic depression Massachusetts has ever known," and even by 1786 the exports of Massachusetts were only one-fourth of what they had been twelve years earlier. It was a period of social upsets, when fortune makes dice of humanity, shaking men erratically, mixing the bottom with the top, a period of purgatory for men of fixed fortunes, a time of joy for clever profiteers. Newburyport itself was a dice box that cast a curious

main. "Peace brought a riot of luxury," says Mr. Morrison, "such as Massachusetts never saw again until 1919. The war debt was enormous, the need of production imperative; but privateering, speculation, and the continental currency had so undermined Yankee thrift and energy that many persons thought the character of the race had completely changed. Travelers commented on the vulgar display of the profiteers, and the reckless spending of farmers and mechanics."

In short, there had arrived a period exactly right for a man to make his fortune, when values and logic were each distorted, when a little shrewdness and a little luck were worth the ransom of a prince. Out of the wings came Timothy Dexter, with his bare arms and his worker's apron, to make the speculation which was the founding of his riches. Timothy Dexter fixed his eye on the very crux of the situation. It was the continental paper currency of which Morrison has spoken, which had been issued by the government during hostilities, and now flooded the country in place of harder cash. This script had been issued most generously for soldiers' pay and for the purchase of supplies, but the payees regarded it

with a rapidly waning confidence, until it dropped with the modern speed of the Lire and approached the Mark in its downward course. Soon residents in remote spots were unable to keep track of its dwindling value, when even Massachusetts state bonds began selling at two shillings sixpence to the pound! A phrase still exists whose retention in the vulgar vocabulary startlingly reflects the bitter and lingering popular disillusion. "I don't give a continental," continues to this day an expression of the streets, and sometimes we still add for greater emphasis, "a continental d—n."

Dexter rapidly discovered that debauched continental money was given and taken in Newburyport more often with a curse than a smile. We hear of a trusting woman selling her homestead for a whole trunkful of notes only to find that the trunk and its contents had depreciated to one-third the stipulated sum. Farmers became so careless of this coinage that they gave it to their children to play store with. A dollar's worth of it was needed to purchase a pair of knitting needles; common dresses of calico sold in Newburyport stores for one hundred dollars, and sufficient black silk to make a short

woman's coat cost one hundred and fifty. In Newburyport business was very feeble—solid money was in the air, and real estate was in the depths. A man with cash in his pocket could buy continental notes almost at his own figure, and Dexter was the man. Dexter had saved his money, perhaps a thousand or two dollars, as though he anticipated just such an occasion. He began buying up paper money where he could find it, and also it is said, state bonds.

The thing that Dexter did seems ridiculously simple now. The uncertainty is left out of the plain statement that Dexter bought depreciated currency when it was down to a small fraction of its value. The entreaties of his wife and possibly his housekeeper, and the cynical advice of his contemporaries are entirely discounted. It is easy to forget that Dexter did a thing which few others dared. He staked the accumulation of years of hard labor on a disputed hypothesis with the odds against his winning. It took raw courage to buy currency, and, say what one may of Dexter, he never lacked in bravery when gold clashed on the board. Much as people have upbraided his folly, Dexter was a hero then. He was not Dexter, the philosopher, or the slightly

incoherent gentleman we shall see in his wine cups, but a startlingly different man. For the first time his light shone forth for all the world to see, and an iron-nerved man stood out for a little while, easily perceived, divested of his intellectual adornments. It would seem, unfortunately enough, that many observers of this fantastic hero have lost themselves in the mazes of his peculiarity, and have neglected the streak of greatness which ran in the distorted grain. Yet who can sneer at Don Quixote riding out of Mancha? There is a bravery in all Quixote's acts which laughs in turn at ridicule, a quintessence of high courage clad in the robes of folly, and Dexter had this feather-like and airy quality as much as our Spanish knight.

William C. Todd, with an historian's accuracy, gives Dexter credit for the step which made his fortune, but Samuel Alonzo Knapp, who is Dexter's most important biographer, flatly denies that Timothy placed himself on the road to wealth by any original acumen, hinting that Dexter aped the great, and followed the example of Hancock and Russell, two Boston merchants who were heavy investors in the falling market. He neglects, they

both neglect, the magnificence of Dexter's gesture, the courage which raised him from peaceful mediocrity. They both neglect a salient point, that few men, perhaps no other man, drawing toward middle age, with scanty hard-earned savings, two children, and four stepchildren, and used to a life of little things, would dare to cast a future in the balance, and watch bridges burn behind him.

"I am very nervous," Dexter has said, and doubtless he was more nervous then than when he wrote the words, and tossed in a bed of apprehension and walked dark streets of dread. Newburyport was acquiring a number of ruined merchants whose suddenly drooping fortunes added an extra weight of doubt to a gambler's uncertainty, nor was the turn of political events calculated to allay a small tradesman's fears. A national constitution was passed by a scant majority, but the comment immediately following could hardly have helped making a nervous man more nervous still. Many citizens, generously distributed throughout the thirteen original states, persisted in believing that a solid government could not be established, and cynically waited for the entire structure to fall through un-

skilful building into ultimate chaos, and the violent state dissensions and the jealousies which arose at the meeting of the first constitutional congress bore out the gloomiest beliefs.

Nevertheless, Dexter, whether by accident or intuition, had blind luck firmly by the hand. He had placed his money on the ability of a remarkable man, who was destined to place both Dexter and his nation on solid financial ground. His fate and his nation's fate were resting in the hands of no less than Alexander Hamilton, who had become used, through service in a ragged army, to stricken fields and confusion both of mind and body. Yet there was still a period of dull and sickening suspense, during which Hamilton himself came very near to failing. His famous plan for centralizing national credit, and for assuming state debts immediately opened a Pandora's box of jealousies and opposition, which were enough to down his legislative measures when they came to Congress for passage. But, fortunately for Dexter, not to mention the common good, Hamilton discovered not only the financier's but the politician's gifts. There followed a conversation with Thomas Jefferson fraught with deep signifi-

cance, and shortly afterwards Hamilton's bills went through. Hamilton had traded his consent to the establishment of the nation's capital on the banks of the Potomac for the passage of a national taxation measure, the establishment of a national banking system, and federal assumption of state debts incurred throughout the war. There was never a more beneficial political bargain. To paraphrase the oratory of Webster, the rock of credit was tapped, and a healing stream of gold poured forth, subdividing into a million rivulets spreading to the deepest roots of society. Dexter had invested in uncertainty, and suddenly, almost over night, Dexter was no longer a poor man, but a rich one, as good as any man with money—"grate" among the "grate," no longer a leather dresser, but a figure in a legend. Before his wide and staring gaze his holdings rose to par, till at last a delightful vista was before him, a perfect reward for virtue, which parched his throat and set his head to spin. It was dizzying, stupendous, enough to shake the firmest balance.

It is melancholy to think that Hamilton probably never knew the marvellous and indirect result of his achievement, for he would surely have enjoyed the

sight. As credit and confidence rose, out of the leather shop rose Dexter, to blossom with expanding business. Dexter was off on a bull market, cashing in his winnings, playing with intuitive skill. Alexander Hamilton had set him off at a full and vertiginous speed, which shall communicate its confusion as we follow—a speed which defied the laws of education, of social rank, and even the laws of fame itself.

CHAPTER III

In Which Dexter Astounds His Fellow Townsmen by becoming a self made Gentleman, and buys the Historic House of a Patriotic but Unfortunate Merchant.

WHEN Hamilton passed through Newburyport, he did not meet, nor did even Washington's far-seeing eye perceive this remarkable being, whom their combined efforts had created. Yet in October, 1789, Washington undoubtedly heard Dexter's hearty cheer mingle with the acclaim of other Newburyporters, for on that date the President visited the town. The President, we are informed, left his coach, and mounted his horse as soon as he neared the town. The militia marched forth to meet him, and with the militia all the distinguished gentlemen of the neighborhood. As he moved to High Street, following Dexter's ancient line of march, the artillery fired the Federal salute, and a company of young men sang the following especially prepared ode:

He comes! He comes! The Hero comes!
Sound, Sound your trumpets, Beat, Beat your drums,
From port to port let cannon roar
His welcome to New England's shore
Welcome, welcome, welcome, welcome
Welcome to New England's shore!

Prepare! Prepare! Your songs prepare
Loud, loudly rend the echoing air;
From Pale to Pale his praise resound
For Virtue is with Glory crowned.
Virtue, virtue, virtue, virtue,
Virtue is with glory crowned.

As though these verses were not sufficiently emphatic in themselves, and did not carry far enough the hospitable intent, they were further emphasized by the Committee of Arrangements. When the lines of the first verse called for the beat of drums and the roaring cannon, the words were actually punctuated by drums and cannon shot. "And to the vocal," says one historian, "was joined all the instrumental music in both choruses." One might think that this novel symphony was enough in itself to punctuate the day, when we are told that the Father of his Country, used as he was to extraordinary demonstrations, was moved to tears, but it was not the end. A procession

appeared, marching up the street, composed of nearly all the town, arranged into all walks of society. First were the musicians, the Selectmen, the Marshal, and the High Sheriff, then ministers, physicians, lawyers, magistrates, town officers, the Marine Society, Tradesmen, Manufacturers, captains of vessels, sailors, and finally schoolmasters with their scholars. All these advanced, divided to right and left, allowing the President to pass through their ranks, and then joined ranks once more and followed, with the four hundred and twenty scholars, each bearing his quill pen, bringing up the rear.

Down State Street marched the President toward the house which could do him greatest honor. It was the house of Nathaniel Tracy, our privateering hero, "a palace" says Samuel Knapp, which could not "in justice be called by a lesser name." It was a large square house of brick, one of the finest specimens of architecture then extant, and here Washington was entertained in "princely style," after first hearing an address prepared by John Quincy Adams, who was then staying in Newburyport as a student of the law.

As all eyes were centered on the great man, probably no one noticed a more humble individual standing in the crowd, a stocky hardy fellow, approaching middle life. He was not widely known as yet, for very few had noticed Dexter, or had guessed his aspirations. He was a sight worth seeing, if one had realized, a grotesque side-show offsetting a nobler spectacle. Timothy Dexter was watching a great man first hand, and doubtless storing up a memory of each gesture. Timothy Dexter's days of obscurity were ended, and even then an astonishing event was on the march, which was connected with the very house which Washington had entered.

Everyone looked proudly at the house, and doubtless Dexter looked also with a certain amount of awe. It was still Nathaniel Tracy's house, and the Tracys in those days cut great figures, as one may judge from what has gone before. Old Patrick Tracy had begun in shipping when the industry was very young. As he grew older and richer, he had a portrait done of himself, full length, with his hand resting on a ship's anchor, a handsome dignified gentleman with a placid, determined face. When

his eldest son Nathaniel married, Patrick Tracy built the square brick house for him, a suitable dwelling for a rich man's son, which Nathaniel improved as he prospered through the Revolution. There were pannelled rooms, and halls, a staircase with exquisitely carved banisters, broad doors, handsome carpets, huge gilded mirrors, and a most excellent cellar of the best imported wines. It reflected then all the glory of the greatest days, but already it was a survival, a last monument of what Nathaniel Tracy was a few years back.

Nathaniel Tracy was not what he had once been. His money and his houses were slipping from his hands. The disastrous post-war days had done their work three years before Washington's visit, and had left his fortunes wrecked. This educated and courtly gentleman, whose ships had brought in millions, who had given one hundred and sixty thousand dollars to the American cause, had finally discovered his affairs so involved that he retired from his business to a Newbury farm, which he had once owned but now leased. He clung still to the large brick house, perhaps in some hope that he might return to it, or perhaps from sheer pride, but his hold

was slipping. Less than two years later the solid and orderly citizens of Newburyport were destined to witness a painful phenomena, as old as time, but none the less acute; for the once fortunate, but now luckless, Nathaniel Tracy retained his house only that much longer, to be forced into a sale when its value was sadly low. His friends and connections, though included among them were the most influential figures of his generation, could not help him—perhaps because he was too proud to take their help—and the best he seemed able to do was to turn his property over to his old acquaintance, Dexter's alleged model, our Mr. Russell of Boston.* Scarcely had Newburyport the opportunity of reflecting on this change, than polite society received a greater shock, one of the first of many to be dealt it by Dexter's skill. An incredulous rumor began which ended in a definite conviction that the world was upside down. A parvenu, a vulgar man, was risen to the light, one without decent reverence for tradition, a coarse and boisterous fellow who could

* The exact nature of this transaction is somewhat difficult to explain or understand. A more complete account of it will be found in John J. Currier's "Ould Newbury" in his chapter entitled "Public Library Building."

scarcely write his name. A leather dresser had bought Nathaniel Tracy's house, not for speculation, but as his own dwelling. Timothy Dexter of the Wooden Glove was coming to live beneath the roof which had sheltered Washington, bringing with him his plainly nurtured wife, and his two grown and noisy children. He had not even waited for a decent time to elapse. He had snapped vulgarly at his opportunity. A scant two days after Nathaniel Tracy had relinquished his rights, Timothy Dexter was in possession, and like a thunder clap all the desires, all the colossal and half comprehended ambitions, of a great man's mind were projected across humanity.

There was nothing conciliatory, nothing servilely cringing in the manner of Dexter in assuming his new estate, if we can judge from his later pronouncements. We are fortunate in having a few cryptic phrases from his own pen in which he takes a definite stand on the upper strata of humanity; and we cannot doubt that his feelings, softened by the mellowness of age, were even more his feelings at this hour, equally crude, equally unedited by any thoughtful printer—though perhaps with difficulty

we may grasp his meaning by adding an occasional punctuation mark.

"All our broken merchants," wrote this student of society, "cant have beaths (It is left the world to guess what 'beaths' may be) of proffett; goue and till the ground goue to work . . all that has bin to Coleage, goue with slipers, and promis to pay, and Never pay only with A Lye; I gess 4 fifths is Coleage Lant, or devel Lant, or pretended to be onnest free masione, but are to the Contry; forgive me for gessing; I hope it is Not so."

Whether or not this searching speculation into the honesty of more enlightened men is true or not, a stalwart character is there. For the first time astounded persons, who had neglected him so long, awoke to discover what a force had been nurtured unnoticed in their midst, and what a dauntless spirit had been living in the shadow. They were ignorant of his early struggles, nor had they probably suspected his growing wealth until the staggering result of released dynamic energy was stark before their eyes, and then, almost in a moment, almost sooner than it takes to tell, they perceived that no ordinary person had bought the Tracy house. No common,

humdrum, climbing obsequious bourgeois had sullied the Tracy threshold, but a man with the strength to sell a freedom suit, and who gloried in that strength, a man who had a "lite" and had the will to flash it. An airy, cloud-like, incomprehensible being had appeared, with an abounding faith in self that defied all the decorous laws of social gravity. Indeed, he was so bizarre, and so little connected with the realities about him, that he was like one of those wondrous beings of whom Cotton Mather wrote, when New England was dark, mysterious, and young.

Suddenly, in a measured time when life went forward in accord with exacting formulas, and men were content to live and die according to their station, Newburyport was called upon to receive a philosopher, who found himself capable of filling any situation. If Dexter had any common besetting fears and inhibitions, he hid them every one. Without any visible effort, or any awkward transient stage, he stepped from his leather shop blandly upstairs into the world where houses were large and square, and silks and lace were prevalent—and immediately assumed the rôle of an established gentleman! For lesser men of lower thoughts and baser

minds this swift step has been a strain and a burden entirely beyond capacity. It took genius and a native flair to achieve it with a flourish. In the face of an aristocratic society it needed a leather-like exterior, but Dexter had these attributes completely in his grasp. Dexter became a gentleman without self-consciousness in naïve and complete entirety, because he had known for long he was to be "grate" among the "grate," and, whether his contemporaries admitted it or not, Dexter had a premonition that his star had risen and that greatness was upon him.

Nathaniel Tracy's financial stringency was such that he probably parted with much of his furniture, but, in any event, his successor filled the gaps. All that Timothy Dexter had seen of prosperous Revolutionary days, all that he had observed of subsequent growing opulence, he could seize upon at last. He could assume the clothes of a federalist gentleman, and also all the appurtenances and responsibilities which went with that estate; and immediately he did so. He purchased a coach of his own, and a pair of horses, and employed a coachman who, we are told, minded his business and did not go out at night but "a little, and not at all without leave."

He acquired a complete service of silver, and finally a stock of wines and liquors which called for comment even in a period of precocious and exacting palates. Moreover, Dexter used all these acquisitions with the blatant freedom and zest of one who first tastes life in an easy phase. Especially, everyone agrees, Dexter availed himself of his cellar in the violent way of one who has labored hard and long—not selfishly but generously, until the rooms of poor Nathaniel Tracy's house echoed with a boisterous, unseemly merriment, and rang with song and cheer such as they had never known. So studiously did Dexter follow the mazes of the bottle that on almost any evening for rods around, the world could tell that he had come to his own at last.

It was all a noise peculiar and very new, which only a Dexter could accomplish, and it seems to have burst with the jar and flash of a rocket upon the aloof and polished. Partly with amusement and partly with annoyance, the solid element of Newburyport watched the unique process of a tanner leaping forth from nothing into a full-fledged gentleman. There was a buoyance in the act and a heedless answer to desire which many may have envied guiltily, but

which to all was highly irritating. Only a few, if any, caught the magnificence and shackle-breaking freedom of the gesture—others saw only a clumsy man playing the idle fool.

To understand to the full the mal-apropos apparition which began visiting itself too noisily not to be noticed, we must turn for a moment to this strict period of custom and tradition. Newburyport was reaching its hey-day as Dexter was reaching his, when a comfortable opulence and a free-handed leisure were rapidly coming into evidence. There were wealth and ability enough to bring it. We have only to select at random the names of a few men then living to catch a hint of lost magnificence. Theophilus Parsons, who was one of the leading jurists of the nation, had his office there. Nearly opposite Dexter's new dwelling lived Tristram Dalton, a friend of Washington, of weight in public life. Moses Brown and William Bartlett were two of the richest merchants in New England. Both were in Newburyport at their counting houses. Mr. Jacob Perkins, still known as an early inventor, was also of the town. He had perfected a process for the gold plating of beads, then very popular, and was soon

to invent his nail-making machine, his process for milling coins, and his contrivance for printing bank-notes. Down at the water's edge was Alonzo Morrill, the dean among American shipwrights, whose invention of the split model method of building has been termed the greatest advance in the industry since the time of Homer. One feels a diffidence in recalling these names, so important once, for there is an irony about it which cannot be escaped. Curiously enough, few but historians remember them now, and, instead, a roistering, intoxicated parvenu comes marching back before them. Oddly, ridiculously, Timothy Dexter alone comes down the century free from the injustice of crowding new events, and his alone is the name that is called for now.

As Cleon, that other loud-mouthed and worthy tanner, disturbed the Periclean still of Athens, Timothy Dexter obtruded himself into a polite community built also largely from the bounty of the sea. The end of hard times found the Merrimack valley the center of New England shipbuilding, besides which the port at the river's mouth specialized in the Labrador fisheries, and carried on a brisk sugar

trade with the Indies. An extensive distilling business developed in consequence, supplying a thirsty nation with as good rum as could be found in Medford. Ships and rum were the largest industries, but there were others also. At the close of the Revolution there were ten jewellers and watch makers in Newburyport. It was also a publishing center where a purchaser could obtain local printings of English authors, translations and originals of the classics, maps, charts, and works on navigation, sermons, and other moral works. The patronage of literature was widely practised, taking the form of many volumes published by subscription. Timothy Dexter himself, as became a broad-minded man of public spirit, was not blind to this opportunity. Even before he was rich he joined a group of prominent citizens in defraying publication costs of a volume in its nature most refined and salutory. It was entitled:

Letters
to a
Young Lady
on a variety of
Useful and Interesting Subjects
Calculated to
Improve the Heart, Form the Manners
and

Enlighten the Understanding
"That our Daughters may be as Polished Corners of the Temple"
By the
Rev. John Bennett
Author of Strictures on Female Education

Obviously Dexter had his daughter on his mind, as he often did in later life. Doubtless poor little Nancy Dexter read the letters carefully back at the Sign of the Glove, and, after reading the above title, who can say that Dexter did not entertain a parent's responsibility? If the letters bore but little fruit, it was no fault of his. He had paid for them. He had done his best.

In the privateering epoch the sea had washed up gold, and now it brought new luxuries for gold to buy, luxuries which raised Dexter and his town above the narrow Calvinism of the hinterland, and added a touch of Babylonish pleasure, pitched higher than Dr. Spring's Babylonish pipe. Let us pass, for example, to the business section of the town which then existed, past the publishing houses with their books to the jeweller's shops we have mentioned. There one might purchase silver service made to order, or select from "an elegant assortment

of Lockets, gilt, pearl and glass Earrings, Broach Pins, Bracelets, Gold and Silver Cord, Spangles, Key Rings, India Rubber, Tooth Brushes and Powder." A step away was a mercer's with an equally dazzling array—"Broadcloths, Casimeres of various colors. Striped Elastics, Superior fine color Shalloons, and Ratinettes, Baize of all colors, Yellow, Black and White Flannel, Wilton and Brussels carpets, Callimancoes, Black Ruffles, Prunella, Florentine Satin, Men's Plain Ribbed and Twilled Hose, Black, White, Blue and Pink Satin." The town supported a portrait and miniature painter, who also could work on "Real Hair Devices." There was a saddle and chaise maker, and a wig maker ready in their shops, and a wine merchant with imported Malaga, Lisbon, Madeira and Sherry. Perfumery was on sale, and French pot and roll Pomatum and a druggist at the Golden Mortar, ready to dispense Duffy's Elixir Salitis, Stoughton's Stomach Elixir, and Turlington's Balm of Life. In fact, everything was there which one could well desire, from the staples of the country brought in and hawked from farmer's wagons to the latest adornments from across the water. It was a complete

world in itself, as towns were then, supplying itself with necessities and luxuries, for body and for mind.

If one wished amusement, there was the diversion of conversation, the taverns, and ship launchings. "Those persons who are fond of the amusement of horse racing," an advertisement then current reads, "are informed that some of the most capital horses in several neighboring towns are engaged to run on Stevens' Plains on Wednesday the 27th inst., being election day." Occasionally, too, would come other greater attractions. There was, for instance, a marvellous educated pig,* capable of entertaining ladies and gentlemen with feats of reading and addition, and on another occasion we find an artist of the slack wire making his bow to the public. Among the rest, perhaps worth recording in all its detail, one discovers an offering indicative of truly cosmopolitan enlightenment. We are informed that "M. Perette, Machinist of Paris and other large towns of Europe, a Pensioner to the French Republic, has the pleasure to inform the public that he has a self-moving carriage which has been much applauded by

* Such were the mental accomplishments of this unfortunate animal that he was later burned alive by the priests of Havana and his master imprisoned by the Inquisition.

numerous spectators who have viewed it. An Eagle Automaton, suitably comparisoned" (Here we discover that others beside Dexter had their difficulties in spelling) "draws the carriage forward with as much rapidity as though it was drawn by horses. The driver seated in the carriage holds the reins and directs the course of this extraordinary carriage. M. Perette intending to exhibit this wonderful piece of machinery a few times in the town respectfully invites the Ladies and Gentlemen to attend, and flatters himself they will be highly gratified."

Passing over the gratification which must surely have been the outcome, this announcement discovers an important phase. Nothing less than the polished and sophisticated influence of France was making itself felt in Newburyport, especially as political disorders increased across the sea. Emigrés of exalted birth were communicating politeness to what, without them, might have been an awkward age. In violent contrast to a school of psalmody, which had just opened, we discover Messrs. Renard and Dupatty beginning an academy of the dance, and in flowering language befitting an eminent artist, appeared the prospectus of M. Trille Labarre.

This Gallic gentleman was a "Professor and Composer of Music and instructor to the Duchess of Orléans, Princess Liniski, Princess of Salmack, and general instructor of music to all Princes and Princesses who were lovers of music at the Courts of the principal cities where he has travelled in Europe." M. Labarre offered his services to teach a number of ladies and gentlemen the "Piano Fort, Spinet, Spanish and English Guitar, Flute and Violin." This may be enough to show that a tide of polite accomplishments was rising sufficient to horrify the community's soberer element, and such was the case. Several schools flourished for genteel young ladies and gentlemen, besides which, in addition to the above academies of dance and song, there also arrived an instructor of the sword, and teachers of drawing and painting. The Marquis de Chastellux, the Vicomte de Vaudreuil, M. de Tallerand, and M. de Montesquieu were early witnesses of this finished era, and we shall see they found no cause to be shocked by any lack of worldliness in their entertainment. The place where Timothy Dexter had dwelt, which had been "noue" to him once, now was growing "nouer" still. It had risen out of its Puri-

tanical restraint so far that it took an extraordinary man to impress it. It was seeing more of the world than it may ever see, and more of the world was at its doors than perhaps it will ever have again.

As one looks back over the period, there appears to be a splendor of living, and an ornate grace, so different from the existence one now associates with old New England that it seems too strange for truth. Samuel Morrison, for example, gives a description of such extraordinary doings as to justify a quotation and not a scanty paraphrase. Turning to "The Maritime History of Massachusetts," we find him writing of Newburyport thus:

"Most of the leading families were but one generation removed from the plough or the forecastle; but they had acquired wealth before the Revolution, and conducted social matters with the grace and dignity of an old regime. When Governor Gore, in 1809, made a state visit to Newburyport, where he had once studied law, he came in a coach and four with outriders, and a cavalry escort; and when the town fathers informed his ancient benefactress, Madam Atkins, that His Excellency would honor her with a call, the spokesman delivered his message

on his knees at the good lady's feet. We read of weekly balls and routs, of wedding coaches drawn by six white horses with liveried footmen, in this town of less than eight thousand inhabitants. When personal property was assessed, several Newburyport merchants reported from one thousand to twelve hundred gallons of wine in their cellars.

"Federalist architecture has left here perhaps her finest permanent trace. High Street, winding along a ridge commanding the Merrimack, rivals Chestnut Street of Salem, despite hideous interpolations of the late nineteenth century. The gambrel-roofed type lasted into the seventeen-nineties, when the Newburyport merchants began to build square, three-storied, hip-roofed houses of brick, surrounded with ample grounds, gardens, and 'housins.' The ship carpenters who (if tradition is correct) designed and built these houses, adopted neither the graceful porches nor the applied Adam detail of McIntire; but their tooled mouldings on panel, cornice, and chimneypiece have a graceful and original vigor."

Mr. Morrison is right. Who these builders were, we shall never really know. They were probably humble men, unschooled and hardly lettered, and

yet they have left behind them in their painted pine a skill and sense of line that would need no apology in the best Italian town—doorways such as they alone could build, a steeple that stands above the elms with an open belfry that shows a glimpse of sky, mute, and yet still uttering a solemn prayer.

Awkward Jacobean furniture had been banished to the attics to give room for delicately turned mahogany, but the ancient English tradition going with it was not wholly laid away. At dinners and gatherings there was still the precedence of caste, to which most persons rigidly adhered. Professional men and the richer merchants were holding hard to their dignity and, curious as it sounds, a belief persisted that a noble order might actually be established, a fixed and national aristocracy! It is astounding in the light of the present, but none the less true that honest and able men of business looked forward to a time when their sons might have a peerage, and built their square, carved houses with that end in view. "The past," says Samuel Knapp with the veracity of an actual witness, "seems a dream to those who lived in it and almost a legend to those who take it from history. From history, did I say? History was

afraid to record a tythe of the truth." Already and with reason staid men began to speak of the good old days, of the simple housewifery of good mothers. "But how remote," sighs one, "are we from duties so simple and enduring. A regular and uniform conduct would seem to torment our gossips and gadders. They want perpetual dissipation—all out of doors —full of vanity and loaded with gewgaws from London and Paris."

Nevertheless, it must have been a pleasant time to live. The stately houses extended to their guests a lavish hospitality, befitting a larger place, and yet the town was small enough, so that no citizen was lost, and wealth had a sufficiently even distribution to preclude abject poverty, "It was," says Knapp, "a pleasant place." As he lived there then, his word is good, "There never was any *canaille* here." And Dexter himself has seen fit to sum up his town in a pithy sentence. "wee are noted," he declares, "to be first in the North." When we know him in his fuller life, we shall understand better the solemnity of his tribute. He gave himself first place in the East and the West, but for his town he reserved always the upper point of the compass. And though his word

is doubtless good, we need not take his word alone, for no less a man than the Marquis of Chastellux has dilated on its comforts and refinements, when he and de Vaudreuil, de Tallerand, and de Montesquieu were entertained there by John Tracy and Colonel Wigglesworth. His account is worth following before returning to our own "grate" man, as it shows the view of a worldling on the polite mode of life which then prevailed.

"This Colonel," writes de Chastellux, referring to Colonel Wigglesworth, "remained with me till Mr. Tracy finished his business, when he came with two handsome carriages well equipped, and conducted me and my aide-de-camp to his country house. This is in a very beautiful situation, but of this I could myself form no judgement, as it was already night. I went, however, by moonlight to see the garden, which is composed of different terraces. There is likewise a hothouse and a number of young trees. The house is handsome and well finished, and everything breathes that air of magnificence, accompanied with simplicity, which is only to be found among merchants. The evening passed rapidly by the aid of agreeable conversation and a few glasses of punch.

The ladies we found assembled were Mrs. Tracy, her two sisters, and their cousin Miss Lee. Mrs. Tracy has an agreeable and sensible countenance, and her manners correspond with her appearance. At ten o'clock an excellent supper was served. We drank good wine; Miss Lee sung, and prevailed upon Messrs. de Vaudreuil and de Tallerand to sing also. Toward midnight the ladies withdrew, but we continued drinking Madeira and Xery. Mr. Tracy, according to the custom of the country, offered us pipes, which were accepted by M. de Tallerand and M. de Montesquieu, the consequence of which was that they became intoxicated and were led home, where they were happy to get to bed. As to myself, I remained perfectly cool, and continued to converse on trade and politics with Mr. Tracy."

Such was the account of a pleasant Federalist evening, but one of hundreds of others which had their place up and down the streets—two aristocrats of France being led unsteadily to bed, a sad historic moral on combining spirits and tobacco. Parenthetically, we may add that Dexter both drank and smoked, and the result was much the same. Can there be any wonder that such a society, even those

of it who were a generation removed from the forecastle, should refuse to accept a tanner? They watched him and marvelled, but he was never one of the rest, and, to his credit, he never tried to be. He would not be a hypocrite—his ambition was too high. Policy and taste are made for the elect to sweep aside, as Dexter swept them. He said exactly what he wished as loudly as though he were back in his shop, for he was made to lead and not to follow, and the result was soon apparent. The freer souls, the truly knowing ones of Newburyport, were quick to perceive that among them had come a most marvellous personage, both a man of action and a thinker, whose wine was good and whose words had a peculiar wisdom—both to be obtained for the asking, and both exerting a similar effect. A slightly shabby, free-living, disreputable, but enthusiastic group of philosophers gathered quickly around him, whom he accepted in his broad charity immediately into his friendship. Though their thirst might be deep and their manner hilarious almost to the bounds of confusion, at least they recognized the "lite," and greeted it with thankful cheers. Fair weather friends might leave him, but these friends never did,

and it is hard to measure the encouragement they gave him as he groped upward toward the stars. Like all the greatest he was a teacher and a scholar, never loath to learn.

"I want to know if you all can bare the truth," we find him writing in the midst of this happy time. "Now you are loath to hear the truth. Mankind is *so bad, is so good or bad*, by nature they are loath to see themselves for fear they should see something vulgarly called a devil. Now why is mankind so bad? Be cause the more they know, the worse they are. It makes rogues of some of them—not all. Now I mean no harm in telling the truth. Now how much is it the truth that the bigger the rogue the better the fellow—O for shame! O for shame!"

It is not unnatural, for the contrary would be an insult to past intelligence, that the Newburyport Impartial Herald (a rabidly Federalist sheet in spite of its name) should publish such a broad and searching essay, but the Knowing Ones, the true students of Dexter will perceive at once a shocking piece of Vandalism. The manuscript has been distorted. Punctuation has spoiled its even flow. Correct spelling mars its rugged strength. It was only later by

several years that the unenlightened pedants discovered the beauty of originals and printed verbatim. Only later did they learn that Timothy Dexter never wrote with periods or commas—in fact that Timothy Dexter neither wrote nor performed any acts like common hide-bound men. But they were soon—almost immediately—to learn it.

Dexter's first Palace

CHAPTER IV

In Which Dexter Astonishes the World by Buying Warming Pans and Mittens and Sending them to the Indies.

THE time has now arrived to call upon what muses there may be who guard the border marches of rationality, and who alone can cast on all strange sportive growths of man a light of sympathy and logic. The time has come for muses now, for, without outside and specialized aid to charitable perception, there is a danger that one may lose sight of our hero altogether in a maudlin foolish maze, and forget that all his foibles grew about a precious and rare possession—an Unconquerable Soul.

One of Dexter's own contemporaries, it so happens, has expressed this very thought with elephantine irony. "It must now be the wish," this vanished wit asserts, "of every scientific person to possess an accurate life of this great character, but where is the historian who can elucidate the man . . . ?" He

asked the question with a rhetorical sneer, but it is a juster inquiry than he ever knew. In spite of the ribald laughter, moral strictures, and phrases of contempt now entwined so profusely with Dexter's memory, he has always been a man of mystery, and never more than now. He has manufactured a cloak in which to hide himself, exceeding the invisible cloak of ancient magic. It is contrived of rustic rumor and liquor laden speech, woven with threads of delirious babbling and stitched with exotic humor; until now, so completely is his memory covered by this intangible garment that it grows impossible to separate native idiocy from shrewd buffoonery, or to determine with any certainty where wisdom ends and fantasy begins. Like the distracted observers in Dexter's lifetime we behold a kaleidoscope of changing, darting light out of which emerges a figure in cap and bells shouting the vaporings of a natural in Shakespeare's comedies; and yet, mingled with it, is another vision of a shrewd and smiling Yankee face with bright observant eyes. It is a startling, upsetting aberration, as though, for a moment, a hand emerged from beneath the cloak, a wiry, capable hand, and touched one on the shoulder. There is a

dual personality, the conscious and subconscious shifting back and forth.

On almost any afternoon, and thence well into the night, the curious of Newburyport might encounter a vulgar man in his liquor, whose ego exceeded belief, who talked in so unbridled a fashion of this and that, that even the knowing ones looked occasionally askance. But in the morning it was a different story. In the morning from the doorway of Tracy's house emerged not a philosopher or a pilgrim with a light, but an even more astonishing figure, whose deeds became gossip that grew and multiplied at a hundred hearthstones. In the morning appeared—Timothy Dexter, the Merchant, ready to risk his money for a whim, and to toss his stakes toward certain loss. Timothy Dexter, we are told, made it a rule to be quite sober in the morning, and if nothing we are told he did smacks superficially of sobriety, none the less the results of his labor sobered those who began with laughter; and thus nearly everyone began. It would appear that Dexter enjoyed this universal merriment at his expense, and even encouraged the public's jeers with a flash of genius which is truly Dexterian. None ever realized better

than he the surpassing strength of a fool who knows he is one. In the morning this remarkable man abstained from metaphors, and turned philosophy to money.

Passing on his upward course from hides through blubber, Dexter could now give full rein to an artist's fancy, by adding desired embellishments to trade. It rapidly became clear to Newburyport that he was not content with a single lucky speculation, and doubtless a number of sharp minded persons who scented a naïve man with a copious and loose supply of money, displayed commendable anxiety to help him toward further ventures. Dexter had all the appearance of one who might be helped most profitably, the look, the gait, the voice and mental processes of a peripatetic gold mine, only waiting to be tapped. Indeed even our hero himself with shrewd introspection has remarked in his own quaint way on this universal tendency.

"Trouth," we find him saying once, "I afirme I am so much of A fule the Rougs want to git my Jouels & Loaves & littel fishes without my leave. Thay all caled me a foull, forty years. Now I will call all fouls, but ones men—Now to prove me a foull: I

Never Could sing, Nor play Cards, Nor Dance, Nor tell a Long storey, Nor play on my mouskel, Nor pray, Nor make a pen." Like a proud man he has said it, whose works stand as adequate witnesses unneedful of being bolstered by affirmative speech. He never added—he did not have to add—that try as the "Rougs" might, they never pried the loaves loose, nor many little fish. Many who attempted to take advantage of him were sadly deceived, his most disapproving chronicler tells us, and he had "no small share of cunning, when all else seemed to have departed from him." Curious as many incidents were, stormy and outlandish, this self-made gentleman persistently landed head up with his money bags intact, until finally his success became a legend, surpassing all belief.

He had purchased a suitable house, situated where everyone could see; he had bought his coach and other trappings of the rich, and there now remained another purchase which placed him even with the best in town. In a community of shipowners it was essential that he too should own a ship. It appears that he had fulfilled this requirement a year sooner than he had bought the rest, for, in 1790, was built

for Timothy Dexter and for his son Samuel as owners, the brigantine Mehitabel from a yard across the river. Why she was called Mehitabel instead of Elizabeth, for Mrs. Dexter, or Nancy, for his daughter, seems destined always to remain a romantic mystery, like so many of Dexter's transactions; it is only clear that immediately he acquired money Dexter started in shipping, and also initiated his hopeful scion in the intricacies of barter. Though no exact statement is immediately available as to the extent of these shipping activities, the ships he owned probably did not exceed two, the Mehitabel and the Congress, which a Newbury builder completed for Dexter in 1792. They both were good merchantmen—171 and 153 tons respectively, which, at that time of small vessels, stood for size a trifle above the average. As far as we know they were ordinary Merrimack ships, but there was nothing ordinary in the cargoes which they carried, or which were borne by other vessels of Dexter's charter. It is said that Dexter began trafficking with Europe and the West Indies, and even sent ventures to the East Indies, which generally were very profitable.

Cargoes which no one else would think to take to

certain ports, cargoes whose very name augured failure seem to have been Dexter's specialty, nor was his system without its peculiar advantages. He completely avoided competition and glutted markets. No one ever preceded or followed him. Old men have passed on strange stories of hair raising ventures to their children, and this, in the main, is the stuff we must deal with now, to take or leave, as it shall please us best. As a merchant, if not as a gentleman, a most gratifying thing was happening. Timothy Dexter found himself becoming a known, almost a famous, personage. His ears, always attuned to rumor, began to grow warm from muffled remarks of astonishment as he proceeded down the street. Was it true that this stocky, odd appearing man had sent a consignment of mittens to the West Indies? Someone had said that he was collecting live cats in crates! He was buying odd lots of bibles, whalebone, warming pans—he was buying quantities of everything, in fact, which no one then considered safe investments. In a port town, where trade and its chances were perhaps the most common topics of conversation, it is natural that anyone, launching into such odd dealings, so different from

conventional speculations in lumber, dried fish, or rum, should prove an attractive butt for merriment and light conversation. Listening complacently to local jests, he continued, as in the speculation in currency, his unshaken way, home to his dinner and his rum, since this wise man of business would only make appointments in the forenoon, asserting that he was always intoxicated thereafter. Those were Dexter's great days, when his ships were on the sea, days when his mind whirled unhindered on its own peculiar course, turning as quick as light from trade to religion, or politics or philanthropy—days of a New England Machiavelli, who found time to cope with a whole universe.

Doubtless even the most knowing waited for these extravagances to end, for the mittens, cats and bibles to come home unsold from a tropical, ignorant and Catholic land. Judging from comments now extant, a large portion of the community must have piously anticipated this prodigy's fall, that they might have the pleasure of saying—"A fool and his money soon are parted." Little did they reck till later the man they had to deal with. Gay, shallow-pated wags, curious visitors at his house,

facetious clerks in the counting rooms, merchants desirous of getting rid of unfortunate purchases made additional suggestions, which Dexter appears to have welcomed with a half-wit's gravity, and even to have followed. They told him, as gossip today informs us, to send coal (Virginia coals were being mined then) to Newcastle, the greatest coal port in the world. Timothy Dexter, we are told, faithfully followed the advice so gratuitously given, and chartered ships and loaded them, as though coals to Newcastle was a most likely venture in a widening field of chance. Others suggested, it is said again, sending warming pans to the Indies, as being tropical articles in wide demand, although Dexter plainly states he dreamed of this achievement. Dexter bought the warming pans, according to himself, in Gargantuan quantities, and off they went.

As we wait with other knowing ones for the inevitable to happen, we encounter a most singular phenomenon. Instead of a maudlin imbecile, there emerges from the chaos a darling of the gods, blessed with the touch of Midas. If reports are true, Timothy Dexter possessed an uncanny trick of concealing a precocious business sense. Nothing could stop

his progress, not even his most hated enemies, not "Rougs" or "Jockey handed preasts" or "Deakens, gruntters" or "whiners." In the end he brought them all to book.

In sending mittens to the West Indies, no less an authority on that trade than Mr. Morrison admits that Dexter "knew what he was about." There existed via the Indies a three-cornered commerce with the Baltic, for which point many vessels cleared from Caribbean ports. Taking advantage of this, we are told that Dexter's captain disposed of the mittens to an outgoing trader with profit, thus changing an act of lunacy to a feat of foresight. The cats, to this very day a prolific, glutting and embarrassing Newburyport product, were equally successful, as they well might be, with the precedent of a former London mayor behind them.* These Dexter

* Richard Whittington, Mayor of London in 1397, or almost exactly four centuries before Dexter began his career of trade, is like our hero in more ways than the mere alleged exportation of cats. This Lord Mayor of London and our Greatest Philosopher of the Western World are both legendary characters and gems in folk-lore's diadem. Whittington, when a poor boy (which he probably never was), contributed his pet cat as part of a cargo of an outgoing vessel, and this mythical feline is alleged to have been sold to an Eastern potentate for a small fortune. Whittington's cat has been blasted by history. Dexter's cats may also be of a similar fine spun stuff, but all of them have enough lives left to keep them living.

sold to warehouse owners of the tropics, where cats for some reason are not, or were not then, plentiful, and were in demand to keep down vermin. The coals for Newcastle were also eagerly purchased, because existing labor troubles had closed the mines. As for the whalebone, this affords an example, one of the very best, of Dexterian genius and its method, and offers also a sharp moral to all who scoff and are blind to shining "lites."

Dexter was told by a rigger aboard one of his ships that there was need for "stay stuff," and rumor has it that the great man misunderstood the term. At all events a rigger's idle phrase set a brain wave in motion which no rigger could suspect. The presence of the fair sex in Dexter's home turned his thought to other stays than those supporting masts. "Stay stuff" reminded him of corsetry, and hence whalebone, with a result that rocked society, but why retail in dull numbers what Dexter himself has already written and included in his reminiscence? No matter who disputes these marvellous deeds, Dexter has set them down in his own hand, and gives them immortality. Here in turn they are transcribed, though mutilated by punctuation, in order that a

casual reader may be able to gain the sense:

"How did Dexter make his money, ye says? Bying whale bone for staing for ships, in grosing three houndred & 40 tuns—bort all in boston salum, and all in Noue york, under Cover; Oppenly told them for my ships; thay all laffed, so I had at my oan pris; I had four Counning men for Rounners. Thay found the horne, as I told them to act the fool. I was Full of Cash. I had nine tun of silver on hand, at that time. all that time, the Creaters more or less laffing, it spread very fast; here is the Rub—in fifty days thay smelt a Rat—found whare it was gone, to Nouebry Port—speklelaters swarmed like hell houns—to be short with it, I made seventey five per sent—one tun and halfe of silver on hand, and over.

"one more spect—Drole a Nuf—I Dreamed of worming pans three nites, that thay would doue in the west inges; I got no more than fortey two thousand—put them in nine vessels, for difrent ports, that tuk good hold. I cleared siventy nine per sent. the pans thay made yous of them for Coucking—

"very good, masser, for Coukey—blessed good in Deade, missey; got nise handel; Now burn my fase, the best thing I Ever see in borne days.'

"I found I was very luckky in spekkelation. I Dreamed that the good book was Run Down in this Countrey, nine years gone, so low as halfe prise, and Dull at that—the bibel, I means; I had the Ready Cash by holl sale; I bort twelve per cent under halfe pris; thay Cost fortey one sents Each bibbel—twenty one thousand—I put them into twenty one vessels, for the west inges, and sent a text that all of them must have one bibel in Every familey, or if not thay would goue to hell—and if thay had Dun wiked, flie to the bibel, and on thare Neas, and kiss the bibel three times, and look up to heaven annest for forgivnes. my Capttens all had Compleat orders—here Coms the good luck: I made one hundred persent & littel over. then I found I had made money anuf; I hant speck alated sence old times by govement secourities I made or cleared forty seven thousands Dolors—that is the old afare. Now I toald all the sekrett. Now be still; let me A lone; Dont wonder Noe more houe I got my money, boaz."

The frankness, lucidity and vivacity of this whole passage make it one of the most interesting Dexteriana now extant, and place it high among confessions

of the rich. If one cares to look, there is a true measure of the man in it, of the merchant who, though merry, is not a groping visionary or stylist. There is a clear, unconscious ease running through it, which gives, in all seriousness, a robust emphasis not far removed from the actual human voice. Every line is alive. One can almost see between them an old and gouty man, brandishing a clay pipe, with loose snuff and spots on his gold waistcoat, speaking half seriously, half jocosely, now lapsing into exaggeration with which he loved to embellish his acts, now returning to common sense, now pausing for a stiff pull at a glass of Madeira. In it all lies a true "sekrett," the revelation of a soul.

The keynote of Dexterian success, which we have noticed before, appears in the very beginning. "They all laffed," he explains, "so I had my oan pris," and again, "thay found the horne, as I told them to act the fool." There are the great man's own words for it. He admits he courted mockery and laughter, and he added to it another greater asset. Never did he go into the market without the ready cash. "I had the Ready Cash by holl sale." "I was full of cash. I had nine tun of silver."

Dexter had a common failing of mankind. Though he says he could not tell a long story, he loved to tell a good one, and everything he did has a way of blossoming with the embellishments which only his mind could give it. Belief in self and implicit faith in the importance of the ego are indicated lavishly in his narrative, but the "nine tun" of silver, which has been assailed as absurd by his critics, seems the least remarkable of his figures. Merchants still dealt largely with British currency, whose unit was the pound sterling, and Timothy Dexter was a plain, frequently literal man. He had been in a trade controlled by literal weights and measures. Like a trusting individual, it would not seem strange if he thought a pound sterling represented an actual pound of silver, and governed his calculations accordingly. By the phrase "a tun of silver," a favorite one of his, he probably meant a sum of British pounds and this, if we accept the meaning frees our sage from mendacity, here at least. A ton of silver instead of being a fabulous amount would come to two thousand pounds at the coarsest measure; and his "nine tun" would total eighteen thousand, not even the amount it is now, for the American dollar

and the British pound were at a considerably different ratio than at present. He has omitted the date of the whalebone transaction, but we know the pound in the early eighteen hundreds had an exchange value of $3.33 in United States currency, which would make the nine tons of silver worth but $60,000, or thereabout, a sum of ready cash quite conceivably within his reach, if we concede that he made what he tells us—$47,000—in his first plunge with government securities. And, judging from his purchases and style of life, this last figure is modest and almost certainly exact, and the whole whalebone speculation immediately reduces itself to sanity. By clearing seventy-five per cent on the venture the whole operation does not represent a fling of much more than $8,000, with a profit in the neighborhood of $6,600. Whether he could have cornered the market in the true Wall Street parlance with such a small sum is another matter, depending on circumstances difficult to determine, since the amount of whalebone in the country fluctuated widely with the arrival of the whaling fleet, making it an excellent gambling medium. Nevertheless, even a corner seems in the region of possibility, and much more the

purchase of a majority of stock on hand. In the three hundred and forty tons of bone he grossed, in fact, in all the amounts he sets down of all his speculations, a greater discrepancy is discernible, and a more obvious use of the showman's license, than in his tons of silver. It is a natural temptation of everyone to make great deeds seem greater, and this Dexter always did, but when he speaks in terms of money, even of tons of money, he kept always in the realm of reason. He never departed from it, even when he offered, as we shall find him later, to sell his house for several tons of silver. An elegant and commendatory ode still exists, two lines of which read:

> Lord Dexter like Kind Solomon,
> Hath gold and silver by the ton.

"Weighs gold and silver by the ton" is perhaps more nearly right. His palmiest and most halcyon days never wholly eradicated the reflexes he had acquired behind the counter, one of which, it is pleasant to think, is a distorted instinct for exactness. It never wholly departs, even in his airiest effusions, which makes it difficult to leap at rash and unqualified con-

clusions of this mysterious man's seriousness or veracity.

There is only one reason for going thus into detail, a melancholy reason, calculated to evoke a sigh from each Dexterian disciple. Sad as it may seem, Dexter's parting command has been rudely unheeded, even to the point of contradiction. "Don't wonder Noe more houe I got my money, boaz" he cautioned, and yet, even in the teeth of this behest, one of the boys has caustically wondered. In 1886, William Cleaves Todd, after a study of ancient trade conditions, contributed an article on the character of Timothy Dexter to the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, in which he casts grave doubts on all the above transactions from mittens to that apex of vision and achievement, the warming pans themselves. We find him bringing forth a claim that mittens could have had no sale, and that Dexter never had nine physical tons of silver to swing the whalebone trade, and never could have owned the tonnage of bone he mentions. He even concludes by suggesting that all the candid narrative we have quoted is the deliberately misleading fabrication of a sly

fellow, fond of all practical jokes, and no one can dispute that Dexter, like all honest men, enjoyed a hearty laugh at the crudest form of humor. "The only satisfactory explanation, then, of these stories," says this iconoclast, "which Dexter tells to those inquiring minds so anxious to learn the secret of how he made his money, is that they were the creation of his own brain, a great joke worthy of Mark Twain, successfully imposed on the community,—that, instead of being the fool he is commonly regarded, he fooled others." While this may be true, at once there appears a negative fact. In all the numerous lucubrations of Dexter this narrative of his merchandizing feats would be the only passage made entirely from whole cloth, the only one not founded, from all we can gather, on actual occurrence. Dexter labored hard with the pen, but he confesses he could not tell a "long storey." Can it be that all the while Dexter was laughing at deluded man, and, like a magnificent, shadowy jester, is lingering still and laughing? Without entering directly into dispute, it behooves all good men and true to rally to the standard and strike, at least, a feeble blow.

"If Dexter dealt in warming pans and other articles named at all," says Todd, "it was probably in small quantities, as he would have dealt in other articles in common demand; to make a little 'corner,' and, to conceal his object, he would give the most foolish reason." Knowing the astounding complexity of the man and his genius, this seems a better explanation. It is absurd to believe that he dealt in the weights and numbers he mentions, but also difficult to believe he did not deal at all. A former collector of customs in Newburyport, when Newburyport still boasted a customs house, told Mr. Todd that the books in the customs house contained no evidence of any such transactions. Even this is hearsay evidence, however. A smaller amount of warming pans and mittens might readily be overlooked in a large trading list, and one thing at least the records reveal—Dexter owned two ships.

That they ever sailed with bibles is admittedly hard to swallow, but the mittens, in spite of doubts, seem fully capable of standing on their own merits, and also the Newcastle coal. As for the cats, almost up to the time Todd wrote, sailors bound south occasionally carried a few, and have sold them in the

Indies as high as five dollars a head. The whalebone speculation appears even more as a definite unshaken fact, some of whose figures at least may be reduced to a point of ready credulity. Dexter himself does not say he bought all of it, enough only to cause the speculators to swarm like "hell houns." It was the sort of trick he often played. When the palace of the French monarch was taken by the mob, for instance, Dexter began buying up large quantities of foodstuffs, telling everyone who asked that he had invited the royal family to live beneath his roof. While the jests at his expense still flew thick, values of food flew also in an upward direction, enabling Dexter to sell at a profit, and always afterward he said the rise was the reward of his charitable intentions.

But what of the warming pans? These other feats pale to nothing beside this immense achievement, and alas for the warming pans, they present a different, sadder problem.

"No hardware," writes William Cleaves Todd again, "was made in this country until a little more than half a century ago (Todd, we must recall, writes in 1886) and all the warming pans in use

came from Great Britain. The amount named would have cost $150,000, to be paid for in hard money, as bills of exchange were then but little used. Such an importation and exportation would have required months of time, and would have made a sensation indeed, for, though common, a large part of the families had none, and they are now rare old curiosities. Is it possible, rating his intelligence very low, that, if he had attempted such a speculation, he would not have been persuaded of its folly long before he could have executed it? Except for the purpose for which they were made they are of no value. Dexter says they were sold in the West Indies as cooking utensils, but a glance shows how inconvenient they would be for such use. The tradition is that they were sold to dip and strain molasses, but they are poorly adapted to this, and nearly a century ago, when sugar plantations were few in the West Indies, but a small part of 42,000 would have satisfied any such demand. Did any visitor to the West Indies ever see or hear of one of those 42,000 warming pans?"

These are the chill and devastating facts, and as far as one can ascertain, no traveler so far has an-

swered the last question, although no one may yet have made the search. The legend about the use of these debatable utensils in the sugar industry is preserved, however, in black and white. Knapp himself speaks of it in his book on the First Man of the East, giving another version of the whole transaction in keeping with Dexter's method.

"Some of the merchants' clerks," says Knapp, "were fond of quizzing him; at one time they put him up to send a large lot of warming pans to the West Indies, as a part of an assorted cargo. The captain, a young and ingenious man, finding this article on the invoice, set his Yankee talents to work to find a sale for them. He took off the covers, and had handsome handles put to them, and called them skimmers, and the pan part ladles. He then had them introduced into a large sugar-making establishment, and they were much approved of, as the best machines of their kind invented."*

* "In the oft-repeated story, told generally to exemplify his folly, namely, that of sending a cargo of warming-pans and woollen mittens to the West Indies, which turned out a profitable speculation,—the warming-pans being bought for ladles, to be used on the sugar estates for the straining of syrup, and the mittens sold at a heavy advance to a vessel bound to the Baltic,—we see no evidence of folly, but rather shrewd management, and cunning reticence to cover it; as it cannot

The eye immediately encounters a telling phrase, "part of an assorted cargo." The 42,000 warming pans and the nine vessels have thus shrunk to a number filling only a part of a single hold. Though Dexter's figures are shattered, still the warming pans are there, as triumphant as the flag in our national anthem. There is also another thing in this account which is worth remembering. Though written in 1838, it was done by an author who had lived in Newburyport in Dexter's time, and had often observed him. The life itself was written from notes actually made near this period, "Sibylline leaves," Knapp calls them, "dragged up from the cells of the cavern."

This allusion, so nearly contemporary, is, nevertheless, under no necessity of resting alone. There is need only to glance at Dexter's obituary notice, a sour, sanctimonious summary, most obviously done by a gentleman who could see little good in him—but there, right in the midst of it are the warming

possibly be supposed, that with vessels constantly arriving at Newburyport from the West Indies, and with cargoes from the north of Europe, he did not *know* that one was a warm country and the other cold."—Mrs. E. Vale Smith. Mrs. Smith is undoubtedly right regarding our hero's knowledge of geography.

pans again. "The fortunate and singular manner of his speculations," we read, "by which he became possessed of a handsome property, are well known, and his sending a cargo of warming pans to the W. Indies, where they were converted into molasses ladles, and sold to a good profit, is but one of the most peculiar." Thus even in a solemn and far from complimentary estimate of the late Lord's character, the warming pans persist, try as we may to avoid them. The incident of the warming pans was so well known in Dexter's life that a captain seems to have come forward and snatched the credit from beneath the manipulator's very nose! Here at any rate is another side to the question, but whichever side we choose is now but little matter. Time has already given her verdict, rendered irrevocable by word of mouth. Of all the men who have sailed the sea or put their trust in ships, Timothy Dexter of Newburyport alone conceived the idea of sending warming pans to the Indies. The thought was his alone, magnificent, untrammelled and immortal, as new today as it was in another century. It is, despite all pedantic argument, proof of a glorious spirit, undaunted, unbound, unreasoning, striving for some

grail we cannot wholly grasp, for a form of glory which only he could see—into the very teeth of fortune.

The warming pans still remain. Their numbers are no matter, their truth still less, and let us leave them so, for to quote our merchant prince himself in his most pleasing vein, "A good laff is beter than crying; a Clam will Cry and warter wen thay are out of there Ellement—so wee the same." As yet no one has achieved the element where Dexter holds his sway; no on can hope to step with him into the bright borderland of reason and of fancy, where the lesser doubt and wrangle, and he alone can rest serene.

CHAPTER V

In Which Dexter Delivers a famous Speech, Honors the Late King of France, and Becomes an Author and a man of Great Importance.

THE businesslike and peculiar energy which gave rise to such remarkable and ceaselessly reverberating reports, went faster as it gathered momentum. The mind which conceived the warming pan coup was to surprise all witnesses with an embracing genius, which beholds the lesser as well as the larger fields. Tradesmen began to regard the very name of Dexter with superstitious fear, for he was buying everything which seemed scarce and holding it till the market rose to meet his price.

Lord Dexter is a cute old man;
Just try to catch him if you can.

This is a snatch of doggerel still extant, which continues to show how happily, not to say forcibly, he had raised himself in the popular estimation. After

a few commercial shifts and combinations Timothy Dexter found himself in a position almost without a parallel in the history of New England. Even Yankees of the wooden nutmeg school finally hesitated before selling him any sort of goods he inquired after, since his very asking seemed immediately to increase their value. It was true with commodities; it was true with real estate. Nothing in the records seems to have resisted his touch; nothing was too far afield or too near at home for his erratic energy. Ships, whalebone, warming pans, land and houses, Timothy Dexter bought them all with that zest and gusto which only a true New Englander has for trade, especially one who finds he is lucky at "spekkelation."

An ordinary man might have become narrow and enigmatic in the midst of these dealings, but as for Dexter, as his confidence in himself increased, his spirit expanded in the genial atmosphere of his broad minded and liberty loving environment, until even he must have paused to marvel. The mind of another would have been strained by responsibility, but Dexter's mind was finer spun. He was following the star of his nativity, where Mars led, and

where Jupiter stood with the candle. Though endowed with the trader's instinct, the generous planets had given him also the capacity of the Seer and the Thinker, which, as we shall now see, could launch him in an instant toward the higher things of life. Even in the midst of his business this side of his nature now became manifest, to the honest joy of his admirers, and to the bewilderment of the rest. The time now arrived when, side by side with his acquisition of money, there also developed within him an altruistic desire to give the world the often mentioned "lite" of his personality, a desire which developed logically and unthwarted, until he followed it blindly, regardless of all consequence.

Characteristically and fittingly, it was through another investment that the world was to discover that Timothy Dexter was no catch-penny speculator, but a traveler with a higher aim. His more intimate acquaintances must have known before, but now the discovery permeated to the world at large with the completion of the first bridge across the lower Merrimack River. Up to that historic time, from all that can be gathered, Dexter led the life of a private citizen, but with the physical spanning of his town's

tidal waters, and the acquisition of a highway to the north uninterrupted by a ferry, Dexter spanned forever the gulf of mediocrity. After this event he had the satisfaction of knowing that never again could he be entirely forgotten, that ever afterwards he would be a public figure.

By 1791 and thereafter, the prosperity of Newburyport was recognized for many miles up and down the coast. It was then a market center and a center for travel over existing stage roads, so great as to tax the ancient river ferries, then the only means of bringing river traffic to and from the north. Several miles up from the Merrimack's mouth, where the stream bent between narrowing banks, the river's waters were divided by an island which stood in the middle of the tide, and here a group of energetic men of business proposed to build a toll bridge, or rather two bridges, one from the southern bank to the island, and a second thence to the opposite shore. This structure was to be known as the Essex Merrimack Bridge, and was supported by a company offering for sale the usual shares of stock that go with an infant enterprise.

As Dexter himself once aptly put it, "Nater has

formed N Port and part of Noubry as well for pease and war altogether as well as the Lord would wish to have it." Without digressing into this wide field of advantages, it is incontrovertibly true that "nater" could hardly have supplied a better point for a bridge. The island in midstream broke the span, and obviated in a great measure piers and pilings; furthermore there were abundant and skilled woodworkers to construct it, with an engineer to head them, a man who had made a study of bridges. There was also money then, plenty of money. The shares of stock were subscribed, and when the books were closed, it was found that Dexter was a heavy investor. He saw a pleasing influx of solid money from tolls, and possibly he saw also what came to be a fact—that the erection of this bridge would discourage river traffic from proceeding beyond it, and would concentrate all shipping at the harbor mouth. As became a capitalist with so many eggs in one basket, he kept an eagle eye on the undertaking, and gave it his best encouragement, though few appear to have recognized its unique value.

"People has offen asked me," Dexter tells us with complete candor and with his usual insight into the

soul of man, "why I did not bye the holl—I have offen told them mankind was mankind it would not doue—nor would it duoe for a foue people to hold all the publick seccoureteys for mankind has so much of what wee call the Devel or Rouring Lions or wouls."

Certainly the world would be better today, if others had used a similar moderation in snatching the good things that come along. In the beginning, out of a list of sixty-three investors, Dexter contented himself with a hundred and some odd shares, "the first cost and Repairs," he said later, "is A bout forty thousand and seven hundred Dollars."

With such an outlay nothing could be more natural than an expansion of pride when the work was finished, a genuine and generous outpouring of thanksgiving, when the timbers were found to hold and the restless waters were finally conquered. On the fourth of July, 1793, when the bridge was running at its best, it became a scene of something approaching a celebration, which Timothy Dexter obviously felt it his duty to attend. A tavern was happily placed on Deer Island then, the very island which was used to support the bridge, and here was

gathered much of the wit and beauty of the town. It was a time when all men were at their best, not to mention Dexter. Not only had he walked into the sun of the summer day, but into the sun of prosperity. As he entered the tavern and took his favorite place close beside the punch bowl, his admirers were thick about him to help with his cheer and to taste of his benevolence. The punch was not all that was intoxicating. The very scene was one to go to a great man's head—happy citizens freed to make a holiday, enthusiastic greetings, generous words. As he stood liberally tasting and bestowing refreshment, the hardest of his life was all behind him. Each cup he drained was proof of how far he had traveled, from a poor apprentice boy into empyrean realms, which grew, with the aid of rum and wine, each moment more roseate and immense. That day of independence, that spirituous day in the July sun, must always be for all his followers an inspiring period, for it marked the beginning of still greater things. In the fertile and active brain of Timothy Dexter there arose for the first time in public a wish for self-expression, and the mind which saw gold in warming pans burst at last into vivid speech. A doubtful

thrill came over the multitude; foreheads became puckered with polite incomprehension, for such an array of words had seldom been heard. Only the knowing ones fully grasped the significance, and fortunately knowing ones were there. They at least were able to see that a philosopher had come into his own, that a new Diogenes had emerged safe from his tub. Timothy Dexter was never entirely the same after July 4, 1793. The spiritual impetus of that one day remained with him to the end.

Whether a personal cosmic urge caused him to make a speech, whether we have a single friend to thank, or whether mutual acclaim gave him voice is unrecorded. We only know that suddenly Timothy Dexter climbed upon a table and launched into eloquence. Even the actual words were lost, probably in the cheering with which they were punctuated. Not only a doubt existed as to what he said but even whether he said anything at all. Its perfection, however, remained impressed on every mind, so that the newspapers reported its grace and finish as "Truly Ciceronian" and violent congratulations from all sides confirmed such later pronouncements. It was a moment for a broadening, active intellect,

a moment for delusion and self-deceit, an actor's moment, redolent with a sense of power, which has turned other minds than Dexter's to strange channels. At last a joyful shouting, the acclaim of a multitude, proclaimed him great in the eyes of all mankind. It was not a speech alone which struck Deer Island then, but what now seems to be the awakening of inveterate ambition. There on Deer Island Timothy Dexter first tasted the cup of glory and drained it to the dregs, until his whole being responded to his joy, and contracted a drunkard's thirst so magnificent and perpetual that ever afterwards in the dim corners of subconscious memory he heard the voices on Deer Island calling out his name. Something latent within him, some secret love of fame burst forth to mingle with his slyness and his laughter, adding to a common combination a frank absurdity that was fearless and sublime.

Fortunately for posterity, Dexter's speech, though extemporaneous, was gathered and set down for him by some admirer with literary leanings. Until he heard this version it may have been that Dexter harbored doubts of his ability—he could have had none afterwards. The beauty of the whole com-

position was such that all his friends and family could only have been lavish in his praise, so that it doubtless produced a belief common in great men of today. After a short space Dexter most probably conceded that he had actually spoken much of what was written, as modern merchants and bankers are now so prone to do. In any event he allowed himself to sign a letter probably prepared by the same admirer, and sent it together with the speech to the editor of the Essex Journal and New Hampshire Packet. Oddly enough it is still extant and filed away in the very cellar of the Tracy mansion where Dexter once kept his wine, for this historic spot is now the newspaper room of the Newburyport Public Library; and thus against the walls now dry and musty the curious visitor may still find a document redolent with vanished grape, as far as now can be discovered, the first lengthy announcement which Dexter gave the press.

"Mr. MyCall," says this inspired letter, "Messrs. Blunt and Robinson took notice in their last Herald that I delivered on the fourth instant on Deer Island a speech in French. This speech I now send you in English, and, should you think it worthy of a place

in your useful paper, you may insert. I did not deliver all that I intended on account of the ill-breeding of a blue puppy, who impertinently endeavored to upset my pulpit, or rather the table on which I stood. The public, considering the small chance I have had to learn French, are a little surprised to hear of my having endeavored to speak it; but, if Gentlemen and Ladies will give themselves the liberty to reflect that Frenchmen express themselves very much by gestures, and that Englishmen have made such a proficiency in this art that a whole play can now by acted without speaking a word, they will cease to wonder.

"Timothy Dexter."

A lack of vitality throughout the whole is proof enough that it was not the work of Dexter's hand, that coyness prompted him to employ another to deliver his message, and to grace it with the easy and elegant style of the period, for Dexter began by being modest of his literary attainments. Time, though fortunately only a short space of it, was required to free him from the ignorant man's fear of scholarship and allow him faith in his own expres-

sion. Yet, though the letter is none of Dexter's doing it demonstrates the liberal and genial spirit of the whole occasion, even to small details such as an impertinent blue puppy, whose origin remains intriguing. The only engraving of Dexter now extant shows him followed by a curious pig-like quadruped, which, rumor has, was his constant companion. This animal was, one writer informs us, "as remarkable among his species as his master among men" and "from his *structure* which should have partially indicated his family it was impossible to approximate even to a suspicion to his pedigree."

"It was said," remarks Knapp, "that Dexter's dog would never leave his master's feet when he was at all intoxicated. What a satire on the presumption of man, who arrogates to himself to be lord of creation."

Can it be that the impertinent blue puppy was the ancestor of this later faithful animal or was he simply an alcoholic illusion, or else a human puppy? "I don't like dogs, sir," the venerable Doctor Johnson once said to a young man, "nor puppies either." Possibly the New England sage shared the lexicographer's aversion when he delivered his address

but, though marred by this questionable puppy it is still sufficiently remarkably intact, if enervated by borrowed genius.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," runs the speech, "this day, the eighteenth year of our glorious independence commences—Justice, order, commerce, agriculture, the sciences and tranquillity reign triumphant in these United and happy States—America is the asylum for the afflicted, persecuted, tormented sons & daughters of Europe. Our progress towards the glorious point of perfection is unparalleled in the annals of mankind.

"Permit me, then, my wife and jolly souls, to congratulate you on this joyful occasion—Let our deportment be suitable for the joyful purpose for which we are assembled—Let good nature, breeding, concord, benevolence, piety, understanding, wit, humor, Punch and wine grace bless adorn and crown us henceforth and forever. Amen."

And sure enough, the fates were very kind. The prayer of the last lines was most fully answered; forever punch and wine have crowned him with such effect that it is hard to believe that the words were not our hero's own. Again, however, a glance

is enough to disprove it. Not Dexter, but someone who was "Colleage Lant or Devel lant" and who possibly wore slippers was obviously the author, whose name we do not know, but of whom we can hazard a guess.

Dexter had already taken an interest in the literary arts, as the "Letters to a Young Lady" bear witness, and, at the time of this Independence Day pronouncement he was embarked on further experiments. With the unerring instinct of a connoisseur and with an understanding of publicity far beyond his time Dexter had perceived among his followers one man at least who was as singular if not as bold and fortunate as himself, who had a subconscious and unschooled gift for fluent and delightful expression. One of those coincidences, so happy that they seem like the work of a master showman behind the human stage, had arranged that a poet should exist in Newburyport together with a Dexter, a poet who was keen enough and intelligent enough to perceive Dexter's uses as a patron and as a subject for golden words, and who thus by practical idealism gave both himself and Dexter a perennial glamour. Indeed it may be that posterity should thank him for more

than his own writings, well worthy in themselves of lengthy quotation. It may even be that his encouragement and example induced Dexter himself to turn his thoughts to ink, thus making him an author as well as a thinker and a merchant. At any rate, Plummer was an excellent model.

He was one of those phenomenal bards who, like the Sweet Singer of Michigan, spring forth now and then among their plodding fellows to lighten life with home-made art. Jonathan Plummer was his name, still a good Newbury name, indicating correctly that he came of local stock. Jonathan Plummer was as awkwardly formed as ever a poet might be, with a heavy ungainly body supported by bandy legs, but with a silver tongue and thoughts that danced, as we shall see, instinct with liberal grace. Jonathan Plummer started like his patron in a humble way, by selling fresh haddock in a wheelbarrow. Early in his career, however, he attended a religious revival where the congregation and the revivalist himself were dumbfounded by his rising up and suddenly delivering an extemporaneous sermon of such surprising eloquence that ever after he had a preacher's reputation. But this pious state

of mind was only one side of Jonathan Plummer's nature. Coupled with it was a courtly grace and admiration of the fair sex, more becoming a man of the world than a preacher or even a vendor of haddock. His wheelbarrow finally became a conveyance for contraband literature of a sort that was frowned upon by the godly and which the adroit Plummer concealed beneath a layer of straw and exhibited and sold only to the proper person. In addition to this literary traffic he also recited in the main business square selections of poems he had read, with an abandon and vigor that greatly delighted the populace. There was a dearth of literature then for the vulgar mind that seems incredible in the present flood of news print and periodicals, and this situation made Plummer soon discover that words moved faster than fresh caught fish. Gradually he took to printing broadsides of his own, adding them to his other stock on sale, accounts of melancholy murders and shipwrecks, an occasional sermon, done with a lurid originality which made most excellent reading. From the water-front and the back country he began to gather an eager and gaping public anxious for something new.

Fortunately for present records of all that is odd and splendid Jonathan Plummer knew a good thing when he saw it. He no longer had to wait to record shipwrecks and funerals, for Timothy Dexter was perennially new, not only new in himself but ready to buy words as readily as whale bone, delighted and gratified at printed praise. Even now few successful business men exist who are not anxious to have their exploits known, and Dexter had the same desire. As he said himself, he knew he would become great and in Plummer he found a ready means of buying greatness without measure. Perhaps he never realized how great he was until he and Plummer met. If so, he was rapidly undeceived, for Plummer attached himself with the avidity of a limpit to Dexter's household or, stronger than a limpit's grasp, with the energy of a hungry genius.

If Timothy Dexter's head needed turning, if his ego required expansion, which is altogether improbable, Plummer was the man to do it. Though of local and plain origin Plummer had been born with all the wiles of a sycophant, such as would have been envied in a sultan's court. Much of Plummer's grandiloquent praise has shared the fate of ephem-

eral things, but there still exists a broadside indicative of his not-too-subtle flattery and also of his romantic taste. It is entitled:

Plummer's Declaration of War with
The Fair Ladies of the Five Northern States
and
The Author's Congratulatory Address
to Citizen Timothy Dexter on his
Attaining an Independent Fortune.

Copies of this broadside and others Plummer placed in neat rolls in a basket and exposed them for public sale, thus giving the public the rare opportunity of buying wares direct from the author. It was a profitable and gratifying method, such as might cause a rise in the self-esteem of any subject of whom Plummer wrote, and through it Dexter at last had the pleasure of further recognition. As the printed word always conveys a peculiar veracity, it is natural that Plummer's statements confirmed Dexter's most optimistic suspicions. He was growing, almost without effort into a man of consequence.

Even now a dulcet wine-like quality exists in Plummer's periods which sets the ears to ringing, so that one example is enough to excuse Dexter's

normal vanity for being inflamed beyond the bounds of reason, for, not content with his basket, Plummer actually had recourse to the newspaper to announce Dexter's excellence.

"To Citizen Dexter," we find this adroit man of letters writing in the ancient files, "the favorite of the Goddess who presides over riches. Wise and wealthy citizen:

"Julius Cæsar, a renowned and ever victorious Roman Emperor, being once at sea, in a tremendous storm, banished the fears of his pilot, who expressed great concern, by informing them that he bore Cæsar and his fortune. Now, sir, I beg leave to inform you that I have been very fearful that I should draw nothing in the present Connecticut Manufactury Lottery, and my diffidence is so great that I have not yet ventured to lay out in it a single cent, nor can I yet resolve, so far, to trust my ragged fortune.

"In this disagreeable situation to whom but you, my generous patron, can I look for the favor which Cæsar granted his despairing pilot? In the name then of Apollo, my immortal master, let your drooping Poet receive one or two of these tickets from your bounteous hand. This favor granted,

My joy shall then, from shore to shore,
Resound till time shall be no more.

"I shall then have substantial reason to hope that a part of the fortune, not of the conquering Cæsar, but of the lucky, the successful Dexter, will attend me. My muse whispers that tickets bought by so fortunate a gentleman benevolently given by you, and gratefully received by me, will be very likely to draw some capital prize. I am, sir, your very humble servant and affectionate bard,

"Jonathan Plummer, Jun."

"It requires great judgment in doing right," Dexter once said, "in giving borrowing trusting and lending," but who can doubt that Dexter did the right thing and bought the tickets? Such pleasantly couched appeals as these were bearing obvious results, as Plummer's words themselves reveal. Almost automatically a gigantic egotistical force was coming into action, for surely it would be hard to find any one, who, after reading such lines, would not crave for more. Except in proportion, Dexter's weakness was that of normal man, but in Dexter an appetite for praise was whetted which exceeded

that of emperors and rajahs. Without encouragement it might have languished, but he found encouragement at every turn. After the episode at the bridge, and possibly before it, questionable inhabitants of the town discovered this great and profitable Dexterian trait, even as eager searchers today seek out the chinks in a rich man's armor. Upon the business side the world had tried and failed, but it was different with Dexter's vanity. It became rapidly evident that the most unskillful could play upon it. A word of flattery meant a meal at the Tracy house or at least a glass of wine and a very merry evening. Almost automatically, almost without perceiving how he arrived at them, Dexter began to assume startling and ridiculous proportions, exciting increasing comment. In a short space he was more than a self-made gentleman—he was a figure beyond a gentleman's estate, more startling and arresting than the greatest gentleman. Suddenly, as the first excitement of being rich was waning, Dexter found himself the patron of a poet, a most unique and startling honor in a democratic country, and not only a patron, but the center of a whole society of obsequious and thirsty followers,

an actor on the stage of the world at whom the curious stared openly whenever he walked abroad. Half consciously, half seriously, the singular and jovial Dexter was assuming the rôle of a character such as never had been seen before or since, of a great man who had no greatness except a will for being great. He was a victim of circumstance and a victim of himself. Like Malvolio, greatness was being thrust upon him by a sly and penurious man in the guise of a poet. Visitors at his door, urchins in the street, were also thrusting forward greatness as they laughed behind their hands. As we examine these early springs which were to launch him to the skies of eccentricity, it would almost seem that Dexter felt an artist's responsibility, that he had some vague belief that the world expected greatness of him. At any rate he began to gratify the world.

Just as he watched the markets for likely commodities, so he watched opportunity for further fame, and a new opportunity soon followed in the death of an unfortunate and more famous man—none other than King Louis XVI of France. It was fashionable at that time to sympathize with the difficulties of the ill-starred Bourbon house, a fashion

in which we have seen Dexter share profitably, if it is true that he had purchased food to feed the royal family. Odd as this conceit seems now, Dexter was not the only one in America who felt he might help the king. Of an evening young men often gathered to discuss half seriously a rescue for the king and queen of France and further up the coast a ship captain actually brought his vessel to Havre for the purpose and even furnished his house for Marie Antoinette. America was the home of persecuted and tormented sons and daughters of Europe, but as July waned into autumn and winter came it became clear that Louis of France would never reach these freer shores.

By great good fortune none other than Timothy Dexter happened to be in Boston on business when the news came that ended the royal drama. As he heard of the melancholy execution of the king of France, his ingenuity immediately hit upon a way of honoring Louis' memory. It was still day and Newburyport was too far up the coast for the news to reach it at once. Thus Dexter took it upon himself to bear the tidings, enabling a talent for pageantry and showmanship which was a part of his

nature to find an interesting use. Giving urgent orders to his coachman, Dexter sped home as fast as the horses could pull him over the late winter roads. Soon afterwards in the early evening the church-going population of Newburyport was surprised to hear the bells of the meeting houses ringing with persistent zeal. People hurried to the churches only to find them locked. The bells however continued their noise. Finally the selectmen arrived and ordered them silenced and then it was discovered what had happened. The sextons had been bribed by Dexter to toll the knell of the king of France. Dexter had used the deceased monarch's memory to help him on toward fame.

Not every one appreciated the gesture, but the youth of the town understood it. A group of boys gathered in the street, discussing the pros and cons of the event, until one of them climbed upon a fence and delivered a speech of sympathy for the king. Forthwith the whole delegation marched to Dexter's house on State Street and began to call his name. This in itself was a just reward for trouble. Jaded horses were in his stable; his money was in the sextons' pockets, but he had succeeded in touch-

ing the popular feeling. Out in the street the name of Dexter was ringing, a wave of sound and he was on its crest.

The door of the Tracy house opened. Dexter himself stood on the threshold. Dexter was never one to be heedless of the public's call. He asked what was wanted, though surely he must have known, for at last he was part of a great event. A spokesman detached himself from the crowd of boys on the street and on behalf of the rest thanked Dexter for noticing the passing of a great man. It must have been a curious scene, such as Cervantes would have loved, a street full of ill-assorted boys, greeting a tanner, over-dressed and standing pompously in his lighted doorway—a curious scene, not altogether solemn, but it was fine enough for Dexter. Vindication was there and triumph such as no poet could ever bring. Gracefully, and even we are told, remarkably well, he delivered his answering speech. They were fine boys, he said, and would grow up to be great men, and if fruit and flowers were then in his garden, they might have them. Unfortunately, he added, the season was not right so instead he offered them the first thing that came into his head—a glass of wine.

They refused, reminding him it was a solemn occasion, but never was there a finer refusal, for as they turned to leave, they set up another cry.

"Long live Dexter!" they shouted. "Long live Dexter!"

Never, we are told, was there a happier man than Dexter then, and surely never did the cry mean more. For once his cup was very full, and for once he was quite at peace. In one way it was all a small event, showing the growing personality, but hardly worth recording. In another way, however, it is difficult to gauge its significance. In it is the mystery of small things which combine to shake the world, and it may be that the cheering of that careless adolescent group did more than studied praise to speed Dexter forward. Stranger things have happened.

It is well to go carefully now. We have been dealing with ordinary happenings such as might befall a common lot, but now Dexter's doings diverged so frankly from the ordinary that it is easy to shake one's head and say his mind became unhinged, as possibly it did. Yet its course is wholly logical. An obsession of self-importance which now might be

called a complex, was developing in Dexter's brain and growing straight toward the logical limits of absurdity. Between Timothy Dexter and others who have followed him there seems only a single difference. Circumstances or his own power of will allowed this mental development an uninterrupted progress, which is commonly denied mankind. No one alive is normal, but the peculiarities of most are fortunately checked by expediency or by a close contact with the mass. Dexter avoided such deterrents. He seems to have been an ordinary man until wealth placed him on a pinnacle and gave him an enforced leisure which he could not use. After his speculation in continental currency all his habits of life turned inside out. He was alone in a great house shunned by every one else who had leisure, with an active nervous disposition and highly developed habits of industry all clamoring for some outlet. Stranger things were bound to happen. His personality was bound to develop along the lines of least resistance. Nothing was to stop him, for he had no inhibitions —he had no common fears.

Though an obsequious man of letters was his associate, and professional flatterers laughed at each

turn of his wit, much of his time he was alone, with leisure chafing at an active mind. It was natural that he sought a new outlet. Together with his warming pans, his speeches, and the tolling of bells Dexter turned to writing for a solace, this a new activity which became mingled with his other actions in a puzzling way. It was the same desire that brought him to his feet at Deer Island and after all a natural desire which only Dexter's own character made peculiar.

As he sat alone in his great house of an evening, when the wine was running free, his thoughts clamored for expression, until the words of preachers and his own views on man and nature rattled from his head and settled down on paper. He had already built for himself a character peculiar enough to command attention. When he began to bombard the editors of the Newburyport Impartial Herald with his writings, they understood their value, at least from the standpoint of circulation, although they were evidently puzzled from the first whether to take Dexter's efforts seriously. They undertook the difficult task of arraying his words in order and corrected spelling and supplied stops, overlooking till

later the value of printing verbatim. There was reason for this, because Dexter started slowly, gropingly and even modestly, on his literary career, voicing a number of platitudes with a diffidence which is in singular contrast to his later confidence.

At the very outset, however, his canvas was broad, and from the beginning his thoughts were lofty. As a maiden effort he contented himself with nothing less searching than a dissertation on man as culled from his own experience. "Dexter's Chatchize," he called it, "For *Men* and not for Children." This interesting communication in spite of its goad to the curiosity, now used so successfully by patent medicine merchants and revivalists, unfortunately did not live up to its promise. It occupied nearly a column in the paper but there was nothing in it that any child could not have read without genuine edification. People must have thought, in spite of free habits with liquor, that Dexter was in danger of being a dull, bromidic pedant. His first effort was as mild as sugared water in which only here and there appeared the flash of a master hand.

"Now as I write," he remarked at one point, "I flatter myself I write by inspiration—my pen seems

guided by the higher power. I write for the good of bodies and souls. If we do well in this life surely we stand a better chance if there be anything after death." And later he continued in much the same vein—"If you have a weak brother or sister take them along and give light to those in the dark, and bring them into the right path—that is love. Love aims to truth and true justice—and with tender feeling it is how men have a desire to make happy men, women and children and even the dumb beasts."

Even in these high lights of the composition there is little one would expect from a Dexter. A prominent automobile manufacturer alive today, several advertising men and heads of corporations have said much the same things. In fact the wish to write for the good of bodies and souls of others seems almost universal among successful men of business. Only when we consider all the words does one gain a hint of splendor and slow gropings towards the infinite. Here was Dexter, although he had been converted ever since he had a housekeeper, pondering on the possibilities of death and after life with characteristic independence, and here was Dexter showing his famous light and exhibiting his earnest desire to

bring light to blinded men. It was his first trial with his light and his light was lost in bromides as completely as it was later lost in anticlimax or in obscure meaning; but humble as the beginning was, its essence was philosophy, the first of the greatest philosopher of the western world. It is worth careful note how timidly he started in spite of aid from the Higher Power, adding nothing to the remarkable and doing nothing which was too peculiar. This Cathecism for *Men* actually ended with an humble apology, which was also an explanation.

"Mr. Printers," Dexter wrote, "I hope my weak brothers won't be disturbed about my scratching a little in the newspaper. I do it to learn myself to write and spell which I never knew how; I am now at leisure and a man of pleasure. I mean no hurt—I let you know what I know without reading—what I know only by experience—Clear Nature has been my school master—nothing borrowed by reading, or very little—Nature is my great study."

This paragraph, lost at the end of a sea of print, would make a pleasant preface to his works, and such it is fair to consider it. Again, it is a glimpse of Dexter himself, growing perhaps a little mad in a losing

struggle with his ego, but none the less a good-natured man who loved his wine, who loved all worldly show, and yet who meant no harm. He started like a philosopher who seemed desirous not to shake the world too hard. He laid his cards upon the table and concealed nothing, but he made good his promise. He continued scratching for the newspaper.

As we turn to his second effort, there is a change in tone as though he had gained in confidence and felt a growing power. Content at first with an essay on man he next soared even higher, and attempted a literary analysis of the soul of such originality and power that the printer headed it "Wonder of Wonders!"—not without reason, since it was a wonderful composition derived like his other thoughts from a careful study of nature.

"How great the soul is! Do you not all admire and wonder to see and behold and hear? Can you all believe half the truth and admire to hear the wonders how great the soul is!—that of a man (who) is drownded in the sea, what a great bubble comes up at the top of the water—the last of the man dying under water! This is wind—is the soul that is the

last to ascend out of the deep to glory. The bubble is the soul. A young fellow is for gunning for the good of bodies and souls."

Oddly enough this singular little effusion appears unsigned in the press. Nevertheless anyone in the least familiar with Dexter's style can detect his touch. It is attributed to him by Oliver Wendell Holmes, who sees in it elements of poetry!

Again the spelling was corrected, except at one point where the printer for all his skill could not cope with increasing eloquence. "For gunning" is the way he put it, thus doing Dexter wrong, since Dexter obviously meant "forgetting." In spite of this discord, however, it is curious that the more enlightened of Newburyport did not see at once what a genius was rising in their midst, but apparently they did not. Instead of encouraging further and even more original work, the editors of the Impartial Herald seemed to have taken a contrary course. Turn the pages as we may, a space of many months elapses before we find another composition, and then it is of a very different sort, dealing with present events and not with vast abstractions. Yet it is only fair to offer the Impartial Herald a loophole of

escape. The Herald may not have discouraged incipient genius; there is a possibility that certain devastating events in Dexter's own home circle and elsewhere turned him from the muse, and the time has now come to review them.

CHAPTER VI

In which Dexter Considers his Wife, though Mortal, as a Ghost, finds Himself the father of a Bibulous Son and a Grasping Son-in-law, and finally shakes the Dust of Newburyport from his Feet.

STRANGE things are apt to begin at home, which accentuate mild eccentricity, and in the midst of his increasing activity, it is sad to relate, though true, that even at his hearthstone where he should have expected fondness and admiration, Dexter's works and prosperity were breeding latent bitterness and misunderstanding, which no man of courage or of parts could brook. Quite justifiably his home life injected an element of spleen and honest indignation into his character, and domestic afflictions were not all.

The hearty reception accorded Dexter at Deer Island and the further acclaim at the death of Louis were not indicative of the spirit of all the town. In spite of all his efforts, he was shunned and mis-

understood, until a universal coldness toward his endeavors dampened his spirit with temporary discouragement. Before examining his family circle, it may be well to illustrate this by another effort which Dexter made to please the public.

Past the Tracy door, which once had welcomed all that was polite, the coaches of other great men rolled without stopping, while Dexter, a man who meant no harm, an honest lover of all things splendid, sadly watched them roll. No longer did great men cross the Tracy threshold. It was deserted for other spots by the lions of the hour, and visited only by those who were curious, or desirous of poking fun. For such a man as Dexter, who had taken his draught of praise and wanted more, for a man of leisure and a man of pleasure, his hours must often have been sour and empty. He loved the world, the noisy and the gay, so ardently that he always wished to be a part of it. Never, after he was rich, could he bear to see it pass him by. Indeed, it may have been an innocent love of excitement and of glitter even more than personal vanity or ambition, which made him strive to attract attention, and which prevented his being still.

No sooner had Dexter tried the muses, than he made another effort. He could not entertain the social lions extant, but despair never dimmed for long Dexter's crowded hours. Suddenly on a spring day Newburyport encountered the following announcement—Timothy Dexter was entertaining a lion in the flesh!

To the Curious
A beautiful African
Lion

To be seen every day in the week, Sundays excepted, during his continuance in town at one of the outbuildings in Mr. Dexter's yard.

This Noble Animal is upwards of three feet high; measures 7 feet from nostrils to tail; is of a beautiful dun color, five years old, and uncommonly strong built. His legs and tail are as thick as those of a common sized ox; he was caught in the woods of Goree, in Africa, when a Whelp, and brought thence to New York. He is as tame as any domestic animal whatever, and is really worth the contemplation of the curious —Price of admittance, Nine pence, each person.

It is strange to think this Napoleonic move attracted such scant attention that all his previous biographers have overlooked it. An inexplicable, uncharitable blindness seems to have fallen like a curse on all who beheld him, not even sparing his

wife or son or daughter. In the visiting lion, if they ever gave the lion thought at all, they only perceived the irrational act of a foolish man, who was growing increasingly foolish with every month. They could not see—they never saw—an ambition mounting each day higher, growing capable of bending to its purpose everything from merchandise and words to wild beasts. The lion was not an ordinary piece of vanity. He was an example of extravagance combined with shrewd economy. He was both an advertisement and a paying guest, for Dexter, who seldom allowed pleasure to eliminate profit, undoubtedly charged the lion's owner a round price for entertaining a lion within his gates.

The lion came and visited for a week. The lion departed and only left rancor behind him and a sense of failure in the man who gave him shelter. The coaches still rolled by. Newburyport had come to see the lion, and yet persisted in neglecting a wonder which all the woods of Goree could never have produced. Dexter still remained alone, as all men must who rise above their fellows, alone and unappreciated—not even understood. We have only to turn to ancient yellowed comment to detect a note of

scathing criticism, hardly relieved by humor, when Dexter's name was mentioned.

For five years Timothy Dexter lived in the Tracy house, doing his best to instil the spirit of his genius into a heedless world, and at the end of it all that the world could see was a profligate mechanic, masquerading in fine clothes, strutting absurdly about the streets, pleased when small boys cheered him, allowing a half-wit who once sold haddock to stuff him with insufferable praise. People only beheld a burden to the community who was making himself and the town that harbored him ridiculous. Few, if any, realized that they were taking part in creating a figure greater than their town's prosperity, whose memory would outlive its environment. The blindness was upon them which distorts the contemporary vision that is too close to great events and perspective was lost in sheer annoyance.

For five years Dexter led the existence of a gentleman but something somewhere was wrong with being a gentleman. If ready sympathy had existed at home, he might have shouldered the burden; instead, he shared the fate of many other extraordinary men in not possessing a family adequate to share his

greatness, because the development of his talents had placed him far above his household on an aloof pinnacle which not even his wife admired. It is hard to pry into a man's domestic affairs, and close to sacrilege to draw the veil of privacy but in Dexter's case he brought his own sorrows before the public—sorrows that blew his thoughts wildly, like a flame unshielded from the wind.

Mrs. Dexter was a plain woman whom nature had never intended to cope with curious circumstances. She could handle a needle and conduct an orderly house, but she was getting on in years, was nine years older than Dexter, and lacked her husband's resilience and resource. From all that can be gathered now, it was a mixed blessing, if a blessing at all, for poor Madam Dexter to be uprooted, just as she was passing the half century mark, from the Sign of the Glove and her little huckster's shop, to be placed in the position of a lady and a wealthy one at that. Compared to Dexter's, hers was a literal modest spirit used to hard prosaic work. One gathers that she did not care for social functions or for wine, because, though her husband's speech indicates that she was present at his Deer Island triumph, she was

known to harbor a distinct dislike for Plummer and probably many other visitors. Far from growing more jolly, Madam Dexter's disposition appears to have taken a turn for the worse as she viewed her husband's activities. Though she may have regarded him at first with confused tolerance, perhaps hoping that age and dignity would calm him, finally she became a wet blanket, an intolerable and far from passive drag upon his spirit. Her husband being a puzzle she could never solve, Madam Dexter's feminine temper finally got the better of her when she failed to solve it. Instead of a smooth and ordinary life, she found herself living among wine glasses and drunken choruses that constantly disturbed her slumbers—with no idea what might happen next. The house was in a turmoil; her children were turning out badly. What it all was coming to was beyond her distracted wits to conjecture, when she could not even understand what happened every day. So dull a woman as this was no companion for Dexter's subsequent career and Dexter himself fully understood it, summing up the whole situation in his own writings with terse strength "I have bin in hell," he frankly confesses "all the time," and doubt-

less he was very nearly right. Every one in his house was blowing off steam, and tumult and wrangling filled his ears until they finally brought his thoughts to earth.

Dexter's only son, Sam, for one was cause enough to give a father gray hairs without an unsympathetic wife to help. Ever since Dexter got into the Tracy house, it was becoming clear that Sam was not the young man he should be. Like the proverbial rich man's son, young Samuel had inherited none of his father's ruggedness or sharpness of wit, but only the paternal vices. In the very unflattering account that Samuel Knapp gives of this other Samuel it is difficult to find a redeeming feature, and one is prone to believe that Knapp was right. Although confessing that Samuel grew in size more rapidly than most boys, Knapp adds that Samuel's mind (alas, unlike his father's) "was stored with nothing that was useful or ornamental." Samuel was also petulant in temper, and a complete physical coward—in fact "rotten to the core." This living example of all things no boy should be had only one virtue. It was the virtue of profusion, which resulted in Sam's showering the other boys with confectionery that

they might help him get his lessons and shield him from insult. On arriving at man's estate we are told he "plunged into every species of dissipation," not excepting liquor. In short, Samuel was as difficult material to work with as anyone might conceive. One might even expect Knapp to allow this much, but instead of sympathizing with Dexter's problem, Knapp only concludes with a back-hand blow at the distracted parent. "If he had been fortunate enough," Knapp writes, "to have a sober and discreet father who would have insisted on a proper education, feeble as he was, something might have been made of him." Knapp does not say what might have been made and certainly he never meant what Dexter tried to make of Sam, for Dexter, striving against these fearful odds, tried to change Sam as he had tried to change himself—into a fashionable gentleman.

It is not fair to blame Dexter too harshly for his utter failure, since, according to his lights, he did his level best. He followed the best fashions of the time, of the proudest merchants of whom we have spoken, who actually planned for their sons' positions in some future noble order. It was character-

istic of Dexter never to be humble in his ambitions for himself or for his own. In Samuel's education we can see disturbing the elder Dexter's peace the first vague yearnings which soon were to bear exotic fruit, for undoubtedly he had listened with rapt attention to rumors then prevalent that a nobility soon was to be established in America. Dexter did his best for Sam. He gave him all the chances which had never been his own. He provided an expensive education, deluged his unlikely offspring with pocket money without stint, and watched hopefully as young Samuel drank with the younger merchants —but it all was useless. Samuel had the opportunity, but not the spirit to take it, because he was too dizzy with visions of his father's wealth to bother making money of his own. We have observed that when Dexter began to startle the world with his own unparalleled ventures he also purchased for Samuel a share in the ship Mehitabel, but shortly afterward he must have seen the writing on the wall. It was probably aboard the Mehitabel that Dexter sent Sam as supercargo on a most unfortunate voyage to Europe. It was the supercargo's duty to dispose of the cargo aboard as he thought best when the vessel

should reach port, and Samuel took the shortest means of disposing of it. He gambled away its entire value as soon as he reached shore. It is said the old man had some misgiving when he sent Samuel on such an errand, and was not as disappointed as might have been supposed when Samuel came back. But still it must have been a bitter pill for Dexter to have swallowed, to see good money flying away forever, and to see his hopes in an only son going with it. His sighs, his threats, and upbraidings are lost in history, leaving only one result—Dexter was never foolish enough to send Samuel out again. Ever afterwards Samuel remained at home only to inject another raucous element into the family evenings, which caused the corridors of the Tracy house to ring again and violent quarrels between a disappointed father and a son who gave no hope.

"A young fellow," Dexter sadly wrote, "is for gunning for the good of bodies and souls." Poor Dexter's hand may well have shaken, and his eyes have grown dim when he tried to pen "forget," for surely he must have had his own young fellow in mind when he composed that bitter phrase. If so, it bears all the sadness of a disillusioned man who

is growing old. There is small wonder that Dexter's spirit should have writhed when he thought of such a son as Samuel.

From the quarrels with this ill-nurtured limb of the family tree and the jarring reproaches of Madam Dexter, the hectored head of the disordered house appears to have had but one relief, though even this, if we are to believe existing information, was of a doubtful nature. The relief was Dexter's daughter Nancy. Although she was simpering and silly, Nancy was a pretty blooming girl, who giggled too much to quarrel. Dexter's very indignation at the ill fortune which Nancy subsequently encountered, is enough to show that he regarded her with a special affection. There never seems to have been a time when Dexter was averse to a pretty face and a comely figure; on the contrary his tastes carried him in the opposite direction to an extent which may have added to Mrs. Dexter's fury; at the end of a hard day of monster combinations, it was good to find a pretty daughter in the house who was simple, affectionate, and smiling. All these circumstances tended to make Dexter a jealous father, instinctively suspicious of all his daughter's admirers.

Little could Dexter have dreamed that this harmless girl would finally wreck his domestic happiness, but poor simple Nancy proved to be one of those potential bombshells that lurk near the family hearth. Dexter was a jealous father and Madam Dexter suddenly became that familiar type of mother who is ambitious for her daughter's fortune, let the chips fall where they might. With two such determined characters hovering over Nancy a reverberating crash was bound to follow.

Unfortunately, our only description of Nancy comes again from Samuel Knapp, that dour biographer who seems to have conceived a dislike for all the Dexter stock. "She blossomed for a while," Knapp grudgingly admits, "a pretty but entirely vapid child with none of the mental adornments one anticipates in a nice young lady." Many adventurous young men, hearing of her father's fortune, came to pay Nancy court, only to weary of her utter insipidity and depart never to return. This may not have been all poor Nancy's fault; the whole aspect of the Dexter *ménage* was then enough to frighten any aspirant, with Madam Dexter's scolding in the hall and a possible father and brother-in-law grow-

ing mutually drunk in the dining room and exchanging angry oaths across the spattered mahogany. In such circumstances, however, someone not infrequently arrives who can put up with the worst, bad though it may be; and before long a dark unwelcomed stranger rapped on the Dexter door, succumbed to Nancy's charms, and walked into Dexter's history.

His name was Abraham Bishop, a name which rang mellifluously in Madam Dexter's ears, but for Dexter himself it was ever a name accursed. According to Knapp, Bishop was a wise, mysterious philosopher who had traveled in the East as far as Mecca, and surely he must have traveled far and hard for he had learned to put up with vulgarity and with everything for the sake of a soft resting place—but he was not a deep enough philosopher to deceive the Sage of Newburyport. Nancy was enraptured by Mr. Bishop's learning, by his tales of the wondrous places he had seen. Madam Dexter, like a hardened matchmaker, was charmed by the whole affair, since it was so clear to be seen that Mr. Bishop was vastly superior to most young men. He was a scholar; he was a free Mason; he was planning to

settle at New Haven in the shadow of Yale. All this information Dexter also gleaned, but he was not impressed. Dexter alone guessed what Bishop wanted, because he suspected Bishop's kind. Bishop was like many others who believed they were dealing with a simpleton while Dexter watched and drew his own conclusions. From the very first, Dexter knew that nothing good would come of Abraham Bishop; nevertheless, Dexter has affirmed, in a complete account he has left of the whole affair, that Madam Dexter would "have my Dafter marey to A bishup—Cosed the agrement—the sole Cose." Can one wonder that Dexter was justly annoyed—that his imperious temper got the better of him? But why go on in pedantic numbers when Dexter's story is before us couched in robust rhetoric?

"My frinds & felow mortels," he has written, "there is A first Cose of all things, most commonly; so it Came to pass that one Abraham bishup got A quainted with my Dafter—shee A babey, he Old in Eage and larning, and Coleage lant & lawyer lant and preast lant and masonik lant and Divel lant." But Dexter was at his best then, himself a sage and philosopher. He was never too afraid of learning in

others to get down at once to cold facts without being drugged by long words. Almost at once he saw what the matter was; "he was," says our hero with his usual perception, "then nothing as for Cash; he being A fox and A old fox, he was After the graps." Even as Dexter writes the lines, so great is his outraged feeling that it wells up into a frantic cry, "o, o, pity me, All good felow mortels; sade Creator A b, mad with Larning, & as pour as A snake, and as proud as Lousefer—he sade his father was worth twenty-thousand Dolors, & he was Not more than five thousand Dolors." Whatever Bishop's faults, he was certainly a plausible man, for from all we can gather, Dexter came very close to believing him, although he never liked him. Whatever Nancy and Mrs. Dexter may have thought of Bishop's possibilities and appearance, Dexter had his own views, which must form the uncomplimentary portrait of Bishop which Dexter has handed to posterity. Handsome perhaps to others, Abraham Bishop appeared to his reluctant father-in-law like a two-legged Connecticut bull—"short Neck boull head, thik hare, big sholders, black Corlley hare." They are few words, but so ingeniously chosen and

artfully thrown together that they create a lasting impression, allowing one merely to close one's eyes to see this squat disturber of Dexter's peace. "My gesing of the Creater is turned out," says Dexter sadly, "A cording to my gessing." Yet the strength of Mrs. Dexter's character overruled the sagest reflections, and, being a woman, she had her way in spite of her husband's guessing. Nancy Dexter and her bull-necked, learned lover were married by Bishop Bass in March, 1792. By way of making matters worse Bishop behaved himself in a shocking rude fashion before the ceremony, requesting in his haste that the marriage be performed before the banns were published and added, when Dexter objected, the most unscholarly remark—that "Dexter might cry them—down in the Lower Region."

When it all was over and too late to mend, sure enough, Dexter was perfectly right. Bishop was a thorn in his flesh, which made this disillusioned merchant distrust forever after all brands of college education and nearly every one in the Masonic order. Nancy and Bishop went to live in New Haven, but before they went, some unfathomable sort of financial understanding was reached by father and son-

in-law, of which we know only the dire result. "He hurt me and my family," declared the irate Dexter, "one tun of silver." As if this was not a grievous wound enough, the fates persisted still further when Dexter made efforts not to be hurt again. Dexter seems to have stood so firmly against the importunities of the dark and bovine scholar that Bishop gives evidence of growing impatience at the whole business, and finally took it out physically on poor Nancy who, through abuse and blows, began taking to drink until her terrified mind became more uncertain and flighty than ever. It was never of the strongest.

This painful situation in Dexter's household had its natural outcome in fury and recrimination. The enraged Dexter, smarting one ton of silver worth, placed the blame directly where it belonged—upon his erring wife. He was unhappy; his daughter was unhappy; and certainly Mrs. Dexter must have been unhappy too. She became a scold, who gave way to such violent temper that she was a pest in Dexter's life, greater than the dissipated Samuel, greater even than Bishop. It was surely a time for a man to assert himself, if he was not to become cowed and silent.

The latter course might have appealed to ordinary men, but not to a philosopher, and, as one might expect, Dexter at last arose in his might and took the situation firmly in his own capable hands. He tried to make plans for a definite separation according to his own account, even settling a sum of money to be given Madam Dexter regularly by trustees, but for some reason Madam Dexter would not stand by the bargain. Instead of leaving him alone, she appears to have continued more or less uninterruptedly at her distracted husband's side, thus making his existence worse instead of better. Hard as it was for Dexter, one cannot but be glad that she did so, because in so doing, Mrs. Dexter helped give the world an example of mental agility and practical philosophy that crowns all domestic achievements. When Dexter found he could not cut her from his life, he rose to one of his supremest moments, beautified by all the power of his mind and will. Not desiring her presence and yet finding her in the house he chose the singular but effective method of disregarding her existence by considering the outraged Mrs. Dexter not as a being of corporeal qualities but as a ghost. Only a true philosopher could have

achieved it, only a deep thinker whose mind had triumphed over matter. Another philosopher is known to have evolved a camel from his consciousness but as far as can be ascertained only Dexter has ever succeeded in turning a wife into a ghost without recourse to murder. Ever after Nancy's marriage the great man withdrew into himself, considering the scolding sharer of his bed and board only as a shadow, and referring to her almost invariably as "Mrs. Dexter that was" or as the ghost that walked his house, the ghost "that was my wife." It could not have been a pleasant experience to be relegated suddenly into the spirit world while still in mortal form. By a simple twist of the mind, without crime or effort or even an angry word, Dexter brought about stability and turned the tables in such a way that no words could turn them back. Mrs. Dexter had disturbed him, and he had simply erased all unpleasant impressions of past and present, continuing his career in the light of his own reason.

By this single turn of thought, Dexter thus brought a new order into the chaos of his house only to discover that affairs were growing harder yet beyond his gates. Despite all his intellectual gifts

Dexter, could not achieve the further hypothetical step of considering all who lived in Newburyport as ghosts like Madam Dexter. Newburyport was too much in its hey-day, too intent on ships and cargoes to give this great man, at this stage of his development, the attention he deserved. A certain element of the community noticed him only with insult.

When the lion did not work, he made still another effort which was met not with indifference, but with direct rebuff. Newburyport, as we have seen when the bridge was building, besides being a center of industry and a seat for foreign trade was a market town which drew the country folk from miles around in their wagons to sell their farm produce. It was the habit of these folk with their wagons to congregate in the main square close by the water so that there they formed the town market where meats and vegetables were exposed for sale in the open air. As time went on this situation began to cause complaint, because the population was growing; the congestion in the market place was growing correspondingly until the whole square became unsanitary and badly crowded. Complaints and letters to the press finally

resulted in concrete demands for a public market house where provisions could be purchased and displayed beneath proper shelter. Dexter, a former town officer with a keen eye for local affairs, evidently believed this a most suitable idea, for the complaints of his townsmen imbued him with a vast and charitable thought—no less than supplying the market house himself for which the public was clamoring. Though he had recently been hurt one ton of silver worth, he generously offered to build a public market house for Newburyport at his own expense, with the single proviso that it be named Dexter Hall. It seems today a modest enough request as pay for service rendered by a famous man, but it was met with obstinate and base ingratitude. A certain stiff-necked pride, which has always been a New England trait, immediately became manifest when Dexter made his princely offer to the fathers of the town. It suddenly became clear that a feeling of opposition to Dexter had been growing in the shadow, which was suspiciously like hostility. Instead of seeing that the proposed building would be adorned rather than handicapped by the name of a famous citizen, the town officers insisted in believing

that the offer lacked delicacy, that Dexter was bent on pushing himself impertinently into notice, and desired his name on the building more than the building itself. The offer of Dexter Hall was refused "with thanks." Little did the town fathers reck that they were refusing what might have been an historic monument! Through their rash action that conception of Dexter's mind must always be another ghost, a thought and nothing more.

For a man of high spirit and enterprise there was only one construction to be put upon the refusal to accept Dexter Hall. The offer, being in itself of a delicate personal nature, made the negative a personal affront that was very hard to swallow. In fact one student of Dexter now living considers the disappointment, with its final implication that he was not appreciated, the direct cause for a new and vital phase in Dexter's life. According to this historian Dexter was so "miffed" that he determined to shake the dust of his ungrateful town forever off his feet. Little as we may blame Dexter for so doing, it seems hardly fair to lay so radical a resolution to a single refusal of a proffered charity. There is no record, only gossip and implication, that Dexter did not

take the blow with a lordly grace; besides there were many other causes, each one in itself enough to render existence unpleasant. Each day Samuel was growing worse instead of better. The "ghost" was waxing in her wrath. Bishop was calling for money. The constant consumption of liquor was beginning to ruin Dexter's once sound digestion and finally to these distressing circumstances was added a climax of indignity impossible to brook.

Though unsuccessful in impressing Newburyport, Dexter discovered he was attracting attention of another sort than he desired, and destined to burden him throughout the rest of his life. It took the form of disturbances and of practical jokes. Small and rowdy boys made forays into his garden and finally into his house itself, completely upsetting what was left of domestic equilibrium. Never a neat and careful man, the things Dexter mislaid were contracting habits of disappearing altogether, until he finally suspected thievery. It was natural perhaps that affairs should come to such a pass since few pioneers in the field of human nature have ever lived without being subject to annoyances from more ignorant mankind, but Dexter was not a subject for passive

submission. In all his troubles, which were growing so manifold, he displayed a weakness such as endears famous men to more fragile posterity, and suffered as common men suffer. Lofty as were his ideals, Dexter had not the gift of bearing insult in dignified silence, and Newburyporters might well have hesitated in their playful pranks, if they had suspected the rising tide of Dexterian wrath. A crisis arrived on December 10, 1795,—nothing short of a theft inside the Tracy mansion, that caused its persecuted owner to detonate with a fury that shook the advertising columns of the Impartial Herald. Before all Newburyport appeared another Dexter, not lisping of brotherly love or of the wonders of the soul, but roaring out his rage like the lion he had harbored.

"Repent and Live," he wrote, "Whereas the Subscriber's House was broken into the night of the 10th Ins, and several bank bills taken therefrom, this is to inform those well known blackguards and pests to mankind, that I have full proof against them, but from a regard to their relations I do not wish to expose them; and if they will send me the bills in a letter it shall be kept a secret and no questions asked —if they do not, the Lord have mercy on their souls,

for the day of Darkness is near upon them. T. Dexter."

Those well known blackguards were evidently superior artists in their crimes, blessed with thicker skins than conventional knaves, for in the very face of threatened detection it appears they brazenly persisted in their evil. Was it possible, one wonders, that Dexter resorted to a ruse when he framed this threat—that he did not know and never knew who took his notes? As no one has ever fathomed the depths of his complexity, one suspects that he was truly playing a subtle trick, because his ringing threat appeared again and yet again without budging the pests from cover, and, worse than this, the pests kept on. Both within and without the Tracy mansion anarchy and tumult were growing rampant. On every side Dexter discovered himself beset by robbers and thieves who showed him no mercy, until kindness and forbearance hid their faces. Once more he was forced to shake his pen.

"Messrs. Blunt and March:" he wrote to the editors of the Impartial Herald, "I say to whom it may concern—to the majesty of the people of Newburyport, greeting—

"It costs Eight Hundred Dollars a year to support a watch in this town, and yet gentlemen's windows are broken, fences pulled down, and cellars broken open and much other misdeameanors done at night. Are the watch asleep, or are they afraid to detect those who are guilty of such practices? Boast not of it, if you call this Liberty and Equality. Newburyport has had the name of being a very civil and worthy place; it is a great pity some bad boys or young men should disgrace it. I hope our worthy and honorable rulers will bring these lads to see themselves and lick the dust like serpents, and ask forgiveness of their betters, and do so no more, but repent and live.

"Now fellow citizens, is it wisdom, is it policy, to use a man or men so shocking bad as to oblige them to leave the town where they paid one Dollar a day to support government?

"A friend to good order, honor to whom it belongs, to great men a friend, to all citizens and honest men goodbye—"

Clearly enough the spelling and some of the phrases were not his, but though he evidently hired a scrivener to do his work it is evident that Dexter

stood close by his scrivener's shoulder, as the letter contains an unmatched twist of phrase and mysterious wandering methods of elocution which no other writer has compassed. After so just an appeal the subsequent action of the town is almost incomprehensible. Though all the world had heard his threat, matters did not mend. In April in the very street where his house was standing Dexter lost a pinch-beck watch with a black turtle shell case. "As it is a remarkable looking watch," he announced, "the thief must soon be detected." As a matter of fact the watch came back eventually, but by that time events had gone too far for any watch, either physical or mechanical, to stop them.

CHAPTER VII

In which Dexter Quarrels with a Baptist Divine, is too Attentive to the Fair Sex, is sadly Beaten by a Lawyer, and yet becomes Lord Dexter King of Chester and returns to Newburyport even more important than before.

IT was natural, as it is still, that an individual of extraordinary parts should seek an environment suitable to his capacities, a place where the vulgar would not laugh and jeer. Suddenly, perhaps before Newburyport realized what it was losing, Dexter, Madam Dexter and Samuel passed over the Tracy threshold for the last time. A disturbing rumor began to spread which soon gained confirmation. Timothy Dexter of Newburyport was leaving his town forever. His house was on the market. He had bought a handsome country seat at Chester in New Hampshire and thither he was going with all his worldly goods in search of comfort and of peace.

Timothy Dexter was off to strange fields, but fol-

lowing his light, off to a place which again was new to him, nevertheless undaunted and full of hope. Off to Chester he went, and, though the town of Chester lies not far from the Merrimack's mouth, his path is hard to follow. In some way time has caused a mysterious veil to fall behind his departing back, which shuts him off on the verge of his career that touches the truly great; and all that is left us is a shadowy man of mystery communing with his star. A shadow is all we can now perceive, like the shadow of a priest of some strange and mystic rite, who leaves this world to partake of some great Silence. Timothy Dexter was soon to return to Newburyport's shaded streets, so soon that his loss was hardly felt, but he was leaving more than Newburyport behind. As he stepped into his coach with its pawing horses, and whirled away over the bridge he had helped to build, Timothy Dexter was leaving all that was fact, leaving it forever, for a realm of strange fantasy where other mortals may have wandered but which only he dared to bring into a prosaic world.

He was growing to be an old man when he went to Chester town; the trials of the flesh, which all

mortal men must some time experience, were making his work-hardened body sag with the elaborate sufferings of expensive living, but out of all his cares and tribulations, his spirit still rose up triumphant, increasingly active and vivid, as though it had drunk at some immortal tap of wine which knows no morning after. There must have been something free and sparkling in the air of Chester town which is not there today, some rare and transient quality which provoked a species of Homeric mirth. In the society of Chester there must have existed a wild romantic element which could evoke Quixotic romance in spite of hardship and bodily pain. For in Chester Timothy Dexter attained the very pinnacle of mental skill and romantic illusion. He turned upon himself the power which had rendered Mrs. Dexter a ghost, though in the flesh, until only his thoughts were solid and invincible against the sneers and onslaughts of the world. In Chester he made a profound discovery which others of us overlook or have never dared to use. Other men have often wished to be what they are not, but Dexter made this wish come true—by being what pleased his fancy most, regardless of what he was.

What was it that Dexter was doing up in New Hampshire state? Posterity is not alone in asking. His contemporaries must also have wondered what rare events were taking place when wild rumors of them moved southward across the river. To Timothy Dexter's country seat men said that all the bloods of Chester and all the jolly souls who were ever ready for amusement were crowding in a merry throng. Word came that he had quarreled with the Baptist preacher, and Dexter's own account of this event is left to show it, and shows, moreover, his determination and hatred of trickery.

"For A Minster to git the tone is a grat pint," asserts Dexter in describing this affair, "when I lived in hamsher, one Nue Lite babtis babler sobed A way just fineshing his sermon, he says, o good lord, I hop you will consider what fue hints I have given, and I will cleare it up sum time hence; I am much wore down Now, the wether being very warme to day. Less pray, & so went on, fire, fire, & brimstone & grunting & sithing, and tried to cry & snifel & blow the sconks horn, & sum the old fules & yong fules sot to crying. I tuck my hat and went out. hou mankind & women kind is in posed upon all over the

world more or less, by preast craft; o for shame! o for shame! I pittey them; be onnest; doue as you would wish others to doue unto you in all things; Noe fear of Death. Amen."

Rumors began to float back that Dexter was casting amorous glances at certain flighty village belles, and even going further in his attentions, but finally there came a report of a different nature so colossal that it is still alive, surpassing all the others. Timothy Dexter was doing so well in New Hampshire that he had assumed a title of nobility. While other rich men waited for one, or simply hoped that an order of aristocracy would be established in the course of time to which their sons if not themselves might be admitted, it was learned that of all men in America, a preposterous and inebriated tanner had dared to take time by the forelock. The people of Chester, New Hampshire, had somehow begun to call Dexter, the erstwhile manufacturer of gloves and breeches, "Lord Timothy Dexter, King of Chester!" Thus the people of Chester have distinguished themselves for all time. They were able to see the light where Newburyport had failed. They had seen that a man of merit was among them whose

mien was rich and rare, and they made him what he most deserved, the first and only peer in all America.

How it happened is almost completely hidden by that tantalizing veil of mystery which only the imagination can hope to penetrate. Dexter himself may have suggested the name when his head whirled like the planets at the end of an evening bout, or again some local wit may have first dubbed Dexter a lord. Conceivably and probably, both agencies worked together, since a term of mock nobility was then frequently used as form of jest among plain citizens who bestowed it as a nickname on persons of singular wealth or manner. Only a short distance away the famous "King" Hooper, a great merchant of Marblehead, once noted for his Tory leanings, offered a perfect precedent. Since an individual had already borne the title of "King" no great stretch of ingenuity was displayed in calling Dexter "lord." It was only Dexter who made the title significant, for he seized upon it blandly and took it for his own. Here at last was something at which the world might stare, and the world was at last awake. Up in Chester there was a Lord who was glad to be called a Lord—the first Lord in all America. Thus in a

single moment by seizing upon a chance expression Timothy Dexter realized his finest aspirations. All within him that was splendid burst into final bloom, for he seized upon this gorgeous illusion as fast as ever he seized upon a tangible bargain, grasped it and held it to the end of his days; for he was a philosopher and knew illusion's value. The knowing ones were quick to perceive the title's ringing dignity, but there were carping critics too, of the sort who can never comprehend a splendid gesture, and who frowned sourly on all creative effort. There actually existed then, as there still exist today, disbelievers in this noble lord, who persist in seeing in his prompt assumption of a nobleman's responsibilities the signs of a half-crazed mind. But they are not the knowing ones for whom Lord Dexter lived and left his title as a legacy.

There is a subtlety in eccentric doings which often does not wholly meet the eye. One must have charity, one must have humor, in order properly to understand Dexter's wanderings. Outlandish and mentally warped, drunken and disorderly though he was, there is reason yet to think the first lord of America knew with a certain accuracy what he was

about. In the mornings when his head was clear enough to outwit Yankee traders, it is folly to believe that Timothy Dexter took his wine-laden extravagances too literally. He knew the lordly title was an empty thing, valuable only for the pleasure which he and others might derive from it, worth only what his own energy could supply to make it vital. Beneath all Dexter's gloss of wild preposterousness, there is one thing that his detractors appear entirely to have overlooked. This singular man, often so very foolish, had a genuine and lordly sense of the ridiculous and a spirit that was fond of laughter. If one is charitable enough or careful enough to look for it, there is a relieving hint of mirth in nearly all his actions which prevents their being wholly mad, for it is a mirth which even overcomes the weakness of egotistical mania. There is no better way of proving it than turning to his lordship's own remarks concerning his nobility. "Sancho Panza," says an editor of his works, "never longed to be a governor more ardently than Timothy Dexter longed to become a lord." He wanted to be a lord, and so appears to have bestowed the title upon himself, but he also remembered what he had learned in

the grim arena of trade—that it was a pleasant thing to play the fool.

"Ime the first Lord in the younited States of Amercay, Now of Newburyport. It is the voice of the peopel and I cant help it and so let it goe. Now as I must be Lord, there will foler many Lords pretty soune, for it dont hurt A Cat Nor the mouse, Nor the son, Nor the water Nor the Eare—then goe on—all is Easy; noe bons broken; all is well; all in love."

Surely Dexter was not wholly serious or wholly deluded by false greatness when he wrote this explanatory passage, but let us take another. In a further one of his many announcements he speaks of himself again as the first lord in America with obvious and pardonable pride, "the first Lord Dexter made by the voice of hamsher state—my brave fellows affirmed it—they gave me the title & so Let it goue for as much as it will fetch—it wonte give me any breade but take from me the Contrary."

With only these two examples the mockers and the scoffers of a great artist's memory may still be unconvinced of the modesty which this lord displayed, but Dexter is not through. It would almost seem that he had a prescience of criticism which he

has answered in a final statement incapable of wrong construction. "It is hard work to be a king," we find our sage declaring with that accuracy which was his alone, "I say it is harder than tilling the ground—I know it is, for I find it is hard work to be A Lord—I don't desier the sound but to pleas the peopel at Large—Let it gou to brak the way—it dus for A sortment to help a good Lafe, to Cour the sick, spleany, gouty dul frames Lik my selfe with the goute and so on."

After reading this last enlightening paragraph who does not experience a sharp twinge of suspicion? There it stands in black and white in the very book this extraordinary man was soon to give humanity. "It does," he specifies, "to help a good laugh." Can it be that while succeeding mortals have laughed for more than a century at the vaporings of a misfit of humanity, the joke has been Lord Dexter's all the time? Can it be that he possessed, in other phases of his wild career, the power which he displayed in his trading ventures, a power which even the accurate William Cleaves Todd believed as possible —of pausing in his antics to laugh at a laughing world? Startling thoughts as these may be, to con-

jure up about the memory of a wild and drunken egotist, from his incoherencies more than one revealing fact comes cropping up to bear out this hypothesis. In all truth it may be that the jovial Lord Dexter was a greater philosopher than any of us know—at least in his brighter moments—a philosopher so involved and subtle as to have puzzled and deceived the majority of mankind from generation to generation.

It is useless to speculate further. Now that a century has passed we can only ask a question which is bound to end in argument, but there remains one great result which no one can deny. Lord Dexter became a lord and continued being a lord in spite of all opposition. The title stuck and spread until his name was passed as "Lord Dexter" from mouth to mouth, until he had raised himself by his own august bootstraps into an aristocracy of his own into whose charmed confines no ordinary lord, or any other man of plebeian birth, has ever been able to find the way. As long as he is remembered, which bids fair to be very long indeed, he will never be the plain Dexter we have known or even the distracted new-rich Dexter, but always "Lord Dexter," unique among

nobility, lord by grace of nature and the forbearance of mankind.

It would be a pleasant thing to tell that comfort and happiness came to him with a noble name, but truth is a higher duty, now that Dexter is among the stars. From Newburyport to Chester and back to Newburyport again and thence to the end of his days fate seems to have been bound to harass him. Drink as poor Dexter might and play as he might with fancies, the furies were on his trail. His "good fellows," whoever they might be, called him "Lord Dexter, King of Chester," but not everyone and much less his own family called him king. His country seat he admitted was a handsome place, as fine as any from Canada to "Solt" water, but he was getting old and suffering from gout. He was rich —we do not know exactly how rich—but beyond a tanner's dreams of avarice; yet with his riches he had to bear the responsibility of the wealthy. The tax collectors of New Hampshire were treading on his heels, and when he became Lord Dexter still weightier demands followed. "Jockey handed priests" as he called the non-Catholic clergy, "Deacons, grunters and whiners," appeared from all

directions to prey on his benevolence. According to poor Lord Dexter every few minutes this wretched crew emitted a "sith" or a groan until he was near distraught. In a space of two years, before he knew exactly what was happening, he discovered that he had given his wife "that was" and his son Samuel and the pestiferous Bishop upwards of ten thousand dollars. Can one wonder that he sought distraction in wine and in other well known ways, from a scolding wife and this growing turmoil?

When we discover that Dexter had a common mortal weakness, knowing his provocation, one can hardly blame him, though his actions along a certain line are nothing less than reprehensible. He was growing old, near fifty years in fact, but like others getting on in years, particularly like many of the nobility, he did not lose his liking for feminine charms. In Chester his taste for a pretty face and well turned ankle appears to have got the better of his judgment altogether, until from all that we may gather from veiled hints, his attentions to one fair resident of the town resulted in a misfortune which permanently destroyed his taste for country air. Knapp refers to a melancholy experience at

Hampton Beach where a playful girl found Dexter's attentions so embarrassing that her swain intervened in a manner which causes us to draw a charitable veil, out of sheer reverence for Dexter's memory. This may be the same misfortune which caused Dexter to give Chester an ultimatum. We can only hope it was not still another. It is only clear, at present writing, that a certain lawyer resident in the town meted out violent though possibly deserved corporal punishment to Chester's king, for a reason which is rumored as similar, though Dexter, in his own explanation of the affair, attributed it to sheer envy. This lawyer was mad, Dexter asserted, because the people "at Large Declared me Lord Dexter king of Chester." This same creature, as Dexter calls him, who must have been one of the whiners or grunters, had actually borrowed two hundred dollars of Dexter previous to the encounter, and while still owing it, beat his "bene factter."

It was too much again for flesh and blood to stand. Dexter again had recourse to the solace of pen and paper, delivering to Chester a threat such as Newburyport had previously received. Though less than a year had elapsed since his changing residence, his

country seat already was growing warmer than his former quarters on the Merrimack and the petty pilfering of bad boys in Newburyport seemed like innocent childish sport.

"My wish," declared Lord Dexter to all of Chester that could read, "is all Liers may have there part of fier and brimstone in this world, or at least sum part of it; or Else the govement is Not good; it will want a pourging soone, if A lawyer is to way lay a man, and bruse him un massely All most to Death—A sittesen that pays twentey fore Dolers for Carages (there was then a tax on vehicles) and more than one Dolor A week to ment the hiways; and my being libberal is in part of this bloddy A fare. No savage would beat a man as I was beaten, almost to Death. I Did not know houe these men Came to keep sade lawyer from quite killing of me till sum time After; three men saw the Axion of the blodey scene with out massey, and carried sade Dexter in to the house, sun fanting, or Neare to; se and behold the orful site: bleading, and blind of one Eye, two brousings in two hours, at least. Noe Laws in this part of the world for A man of money to liv; thos I lend money to, and A lawyer, and others, thay youse me the wost;

it maks Inemye; then thos Rogs, if there is Any, that call me A foull and pick A Quarel with me About my Nous papers, so as to pay the lawyer Craft to make up the molton Calf—A molton Calfe, Not an Ox. Now the town of Chester has lost two *Hundred wate of Silver*, at least—I beleave more money. Now thay may have me in the town or A lawyer. Chouse for yourselves, my frinds and felow mortals. pease be with you All; Amen.—selagh."

It has never been well to threaten New England with a silver bludgeon. In those stern and stormy reaches of rugged hills and rocky coast it has always been the rule to give millions for defence and not a cent for tribute. Placed on the horns of a dilemma, and obliged to chose between a pugnacious lawyer, or a lord with two hundred weight of silver, Chester upheld the traditions of the brave and the free, for not the lawyer, but Dexter, left this high-minded and active town.

Yet, just as there is a mystery as to how he became a lord, so there is mystery about his leaving. Inconceivable as it may seem to us now, no one has left a definite record of just how long Lord Dexter dwelt in Chester. The local historian says he was there

two or three years, but it certainly was not more than two years, and probably much less, before he was back in Newburyport. His proclamation threatening to leave Newburyport appeared in January, 1796; the notice he served on Chester is dated September of this same year, and in March, 1797, we find Jonathan Plummer bursting into the columns of the press with an ode welcoming Dexter back. This would place Lord Dexter's absence at a little over a year, or perhaps less than a year, but what matter are definite dates? Dexter was never a man who could be altered by time. Whether it was 1797 or whether it was 1798 that Newburyport was dazzled by the returning vision of one who had left it as a vulgarian and appeared anew as an aristocrat, the period was short enough for so marvelous a metamorphosis, and it was far too short for common men to perceive the change in Dexter in its fullest majesty.

But the veil of mystery which shrouded Dexter's absence was lifting; like a mist dispelled by the rays of his presence the curtain was rising on the last and greatest act of a meteoric drama, revealing at last an actor who had found himself, who no longer hesi-

tated at conventional barriers, but followed joyously the erratic course of his guiding star.

CHAPTER VIII

In which Dexter Buys the Palace of still another Unfortunate Merchant, employs a Poet Laureate, rewards him Royally, and does many other remarkable things, becoming to a nobleman.

BY some fortuitous chain of circumstances the luck of Dexter seems always to have dogged the waning Tracy fortunes. In April, 1796, probably very shortly after moving to Chester, Dexter had sold the Tracy house, as usual at a handsome profit, but on returning to Newburyport, again indirectly through the Tracys, he found another abode as lordly as the first, which now is still known as the Dexter House. On High Street not far from the center of the town, on rising ground overlooking the Merrimack and the flat country to the South, there stood, as there stands today, a dwelling, which few alive, no matter how exalted their station, would disdain to inhabit. It was the same square white house which we have encountered in the beginning of this

narrative, and which still bears a hint of the singular genius we now see entering its doors. This house was built by the Hon. Jonathan Jackson, a man of education, discernment, and aristocratic tradition, who had at the time of building ample money to pay for the best house and the best workmanship obtainable; for he was very fortunate then in business, inheritance and marriage. Jonathan Jackson's house, like Nathaniel Tracy's, was built in 1771 to commemorate a wedding which renders Dexter's buying it a coincidence. Jackson married none other than Hannah Tracy, daughter of Patrick and sister of the rich Nathaniel. Thus Jonathan Jackson—once, by the way, United States Marshal for the district of Massachusetts and a well-known figure in the Revolution—was the brother-in-law of Nathaniel Tracy, later his partner in business and a sharer of his subsequent misfortunes; and Jonathan Jackson's house, like the Tracy mansion, left its owner's hands for much the same reason.

Its situation and architecture make it today one of the finest specimens of the so-called Georgian period extant. From windows, hall, and staircase to cupola and ornamented chimneys there is a repres-

sion, fineness, and consistency in line and ornament, which speak well for Dexter's taste when he looked upon the house and found it good. The main building, the lawns and the garden conspired to form a princely seat, a little chaste, perhaps, for a man of our hero's elaborate thoughts but readily permitting infinite adornment. Dexter saw its possibilities, and has recognized them most politely, just as he recognized the talents of the gentleman who once owned it.

"Nater," we find Lord Dexter declaring, like a lover of all things natural, "has formed the grounds Eaquel to what you would wish for, And by a man Eaquel to a Solomon, the onerable Jonathan Jackson, one of the first in this Country for tast; borne a grat man by Nater, then the best of Lurning; . . . the holl of the world cant exceed this . . . I have traveled good deale, but ould steady men sayeth it is the first, that it is the best in this Countery and other Countreys."

Dexter knew what he was saying. He had weighed well his opinion before he set it down. He had not only been an owner several years before his praise was written but, it appears, he did not buy

immediately, apparently moving there first as a tenant and later purchasing the dwelling from the heirs of Captain Thomas, who were then the owners. But again these petty details of time mean nothing because Dexter has so arranged it that all which now matters is the place itself.

For once Dexter's opinion and that of old steady men were almost in complete accord as the views of at least one old and steady man bear out. "It was," says Knapp, "a princely chateau, standing on the height of land about a quarter of a mile from the river, commanding a most beautiful and extensive view of the sea, the Isle-of-Shoals and the far surrounding country. The grounds had been laid out in the most approved European fashion by intelligent artists from England and France. The house was capacious and well finished and the outhouses tasteful and commodious. A lovelier spot or a more airy mansion Lucullus could not have wished." Little did Jackson or any of his intelligent artists know what an infinity of new adornments was to be added to their own!

Back in Newburyport came Dexter, and if people had not known the man they lost, in the Dexter who

came back the merest child could now recognize a wonder of the ages. "Previous to this date," remarks a Newburyport historian, "the eccentricities of Timothy Dexter were not particularly prominent, and had not attracted much public attention," but now Timothy Dexter was a nobleman, nothing less than a lord who felt it incumbent upon him to maintain a lordly reputation, and a lord's estate.

In Newburyport there may have been previous rumors of this autumnal bloom of his personality, but soon all incredulous doubts were dispelled by the appearance in March, 1797, of a poem by Jonathan Plummer which rang upon startled minds like a herald's trumpet. One has only to follow his thoughts to realize with the wondering citizens of the past that a new Dexter, a super-Dexter, had arrived and was about to work strange magic not for himself alone but for all posterity.

We must pause—like Dexter's contemporaries we must breathe deep—before plunging into a sea of wonder, for certainly behind the Chester veil Lord Dexter had succumbed at last to his ego, until as in Berkeley's concept, he was all, and all the world was nothing. As a part of this metamorphosis, Jonathan

Plummer, once a seller of haddock, a roving preacher, unsuccessful schoolmaster and writer for the vulgar, had also changed, as though a wand had struck him—into nothing less than a Poet Laureate! It would be a wonderful thing to retail all the process of the change, but it was the work of a master mind, and magic too great for posterity to follow. The speed of all the action had now become too rapid to catch the lesser moves. It would almost seem as if Lord Dexter, with some premonition that he would seen leave forever the mortal coil, permitted himself a final burst of energy which would make him live forever—that he had summoned all his capacities in a final bid for fame and mirth.

Thus the first we know of a Poet Laureate, is Jonathan Plummer's own announcement with which he prefaced his poem published on Dexter's arrival.

"To Sir TIMOTHY DEXTER," it reads, "on his returning to Newburyport, after residing a long time in Chester New Hampshire: a Congratulatory ode; by Jonathan Plummer, Junr.; Poet Lauriet to his Lordship." That is all, just this matter-of-fact announcement to mark an epoch-making event. He was Dexter's Poet Laureate in March, 1797, and

remained so until his patron's death,—and so he now remains forever in history's more sprightly archives.

But what of the ode? Fortunately, it still exists to give a better expression of this happy time than the work of any modern pen.

Your lordship's welcome back again—
  Fair nymphs with sighs have mourn'd your staying
So long from them and me your swain,
  And wonder'd at such long delaying;
But now you bless again our eyes,
Our melting sorrow droops and dies.

The town of chester to a Lord
  Must seem a desert dull and foggy,
A gloomy place—upon my word
  I think it dirty, wet, and boggy;
Far different from your Kingly seat,*
In good saint James his famous street.

There all the arts and graces join
  To make you happy and contented:
There flowing wits and sparkling wine
  Will duly to you be presented—
Aye, raptures rare combined meet
To bless and crown saint James his street

Your happy change I'll loudly sing,
  Your change to all the town transporting,

* Kingly seat—The elegant house in saint James his park and street, which belonged some time since to Jonathan Jackson, Esq. (Plummer's own note.)

And while I make the valleys ring,
I shall rejoice at your good fortune.
From Chester to saint James his street
Is quite a glorious retreat.

But I a suit of clothes must have
To sing my joy in, and the best, sir;
A suit of red; not black and grave,
Provided by the earl of Chester.
To Todd the tailor send, I pray:—
Your Lordship's poet must be gay.

The sable suit is handsome yet;
But not so proper to rejoice in,
As that which now you'll for me get,
To tune my very joyful voice in.
In Europe I know not a king
Without a bard in red to sing.

You in this place have many friends,
And all the Lawyers here are civil:
They know full well that envy tends
To send its owners to the devil.
I think they will not beat you blind,
Because the Nymphs are to you kind.*

Your house † in Chester is not fit
For a wise noble lord to dwell in—

* Because the Nymphs &c.—It is strongly suspected that Lord Dexter was bruised half to death, by a lawyer in New Hampshire, partly on account of the ladies' regard for him in that state. (Again Plummer's own delicate note.)

† The house is elegant; but only 2 stories high. (Still again, this is Plummer's note.)

In this you may display your wit:
  Aye, this I'm sure you will do well in.
I hope you'll shine gay as a lark
A glory to saint James his park.

Bless me! What wits and beauties there,
  With dazzling lustre gay are shining!
Nymphs whom to angels I compare,
  And wits who 're not with envy pining:
Beaux who will never beat you blind
Because the Nymphs are to you kind.

Lo! what a place below the skies,*
  How stately, elegant, and splendid,
Is that boon earthly paradise,
  Where wit and beauty are so blended!
You truly hit the proper mark
By living in St. James his park.

A man of sense should always live
  Among the highest and the best, sir,
And never pine away and grieve
  Among the fighting folks at Chester:
Then shine, rich lord, the gayest spark,
The glory of saint James his park.

All these notes are inserted verbatim as Plummer himself wrote them. Though the constant refer-

* Lo! what a place, &c.—Newburyport in general, and saint James his park in particular. (And yet again, this burst of civic pride—is Plummer's own note.)

ences to "saint James his park" are confusing, the answer probably is that the name "saint James," which Plummer had doubtless heard applied to the British court, fitted his ideas as a suitable title for Dexter's new residence.

Not the beauty of the poem (and here and there it has lines of genuine poetic grace) renders it remarkable, as much as the uncanny element of its prophecy. Though it now seems more than probable that Lord Dexter's Poet Laureate was wished upon him, like his noble patents, by outside agencies, here was a poet that was worth his hire. He could both proclaim greatness and give inspiration to his master. Dexter had hit the mark at last and had come into a world that was quite his own, where sparkling wine and wits and nymphs, where pageantry and mystery were all to combine into the paradise of a great man's dream.

Yet such is the irony of most great things that Dexter was too engrossed with pains of the body fully to appreciate poetic beauty, when Plummer penetrated to his presence to claim the reward at which he had gracefully hinted. "It happened," Plummer has explained in his personal history, "that

the Earl of Chester (evidently Plummer himself was at some loss regarding Dexter's exact status in the new Almanac de Gotha) was ill of the gout about the time this ode made its appearance. This I imagine operated to my disadvantage in my obtaining the suit of red. The painful disease, in a great measure, destroyed his Lordship's relish for poetry. Lady Dexter, too, coöperated with the gout in the business of withholding from me the object of my wishes. She is not altogether so generous, so noble, so royal, as his Lordship, and when she rules the house, those benevolent actions are not always done which at other times adorn the place. I would not be understood to hint that she alone ever absolutely controls him; but I cannot say that she and the gout together do not sometimes get him under. I did not expect that any thing would hinder him from cloathing his own poet; but alas! I must confess I have not yet received the suit."

Exalted as Plummer's opinion undoubtedly was of his patron, even he did not suspect the power of the Dexterian spirit, which could rise above all realms of pain, though of all men living Plummer should have had faith, and should have known that

the Lord of Chester had a capacity for detail which would not let a Laureate go unclad, once he was on the threshold. For a small stipend, doubtlessly sharply bargained for, since Dexter never paid more than was necessary for anything, he attached Plummer to his house as completely as he had affixed the title of lord to his name. Moreover, no sooner was Plummer so established, than he found he had an insatiate master, constantly demanding poetic gems faster and better than they could be written. Chroniclers even tell us that the suit itself was not lacking. Under the gratified patron's supervision a garment was constructed, not of simple red, and, one is prone to believe certainly not the sable garment mentioned in Plummer's poem, although its base was also black. It was a suit, or, other authorities say, a cloak, liberally sprinkled with silver stars, which Plummer donned to the great edification of the multitude, and more particularly to the delight of nymphs and jolly souls who began to gather about the Jackson house. It consisted, according to our fullest report, of a long black frock coat "with stars on the collar and also on the front corners." Wherever fringes could readily be sewn they were

added, and the whole effect was enhanced by shoes with large buckles, a large cocked hat and a gold-headed cane. Surely no poet was ever better clad, but Plummer, in spite of his love for nymphs and poetic license could never rid himself from a Puritanical conscience and certain religious convictions, which had caused him to preach in his youth. The gratitude he should have borne towards Dexter for his gift was marred by narrow inhibitions, so disturbing to his mind that Plummer finally dreamed that wearing fringes was a sin. When he imparted this sneaking conviction to his patron, Dexter could not understand the waverings of a meaner soul. Though he came near to losing his Laureate in consequence, he seems to have over-ridden Plummer's angry mutterings, for his Laureate continued in livery.

In the ode and the subsequent proceedings appears a light and airy touch that has hitherto been foreign in Dexter's actions. For Dexter, at last, all things were getting light and airy. The world that had shunned him for so long, he had shut outside his gates, and, like a true philosopher, was constructing a world of his own which was more suitable and finer for himself, and for those disciples

he invited to inhabit it, than austere and disapproving Massachusetts Bay. Poetry, eloquence and sparkling wit at last were finding sanctuary. The dissipated and jovial spirits which once had haunted Merry Mount, when New England was younger still, were hovering about Lord Dexter's head, bewitching and intriguing. Senility or monstrous humor—one can use either term and either may be right—had found a human vehicle for marvellous expression. "So we Lafed," writes Lord Dexter at the end of a convulsing anecdote, "and it shuke of the spleane." The jolly lord was finding ample opportunity for laughter and honest, harmless fun, and his disciples were egging him on toward further merriment. He was not through with Plummer yet.

There on the Jackson estate where "Nater formed the ground Eaquel to what you would wish," in the midst of the stately garden which grew before the house, once after Dexter had dined well, he gave way to an impulse which, it is hinted, Plummer himself suggested, an impulse which has never been obeyed in America before or since. It was another flash of Dexterian inspiration, but of a nature so cloudlike and peculiar, so beyond the ringing of

bells and like conceits, that Newburyport still echoes with its memory. There in the garden of Jonathan Jackson, Dexter harked back to Petrarch of Corinna, to the Druids and the days of Greece, and actually crowned the unresisting Plummer in token of his genius. Although the whole idea could hardly have been other than a flash of thought such as must be acted upon immediately to retain its full perfection, a throng of small boys hastily gathered, probably attracted by loud noises, to witness the unprecedented spectacle. Only the imagination can draw its full beauty now, because there was no Cervantes present to record the action. It has been said that Dexter could find no laurel or even mistletoe about the place and compromised, on a friendly suggestion, with parsley, perhaps more decorative and fitting. The boyish spectators, however, too young to understand the full significance of the occasion, at last became so restive that Dexter, and Plummer also, were obliged to leave the scene before the ceremony was entirely completed.

Such curious events as these, so wholly different from the trend of the times, and so foreign to man's ordinary thoughts and habits, could not go without

notice. Newburyport had been cold, and Chester had been hostile, but now at last the name of Dexter was on everyone's lips. Dexter found himself basking beneath the mystified gaze of all mankind, and listening to its pleasing comments. If the noble lord was in a merry mood, he was finding cause for merriment, and ample means for making the whole world merry. With complacent pleasure, he watched groups of town and country folk peering through his fence and exchanging whispers. Naturally glad to have himself and what he owned admired, he threw his grounds open to visitors, particularly encouraging wandering damsels to partake of his flowers and fruits, who with varying feelings, according to who they were, discovered that Dexter had retained the proclivities that had caused his Chester downfall. "The story," we are assured, "of his attempt at improper liberties with his female visitors soon became current," until those who continued walking his grounds "were of the less scrupulous of their sex." The truth must be out, regarding all great men's weaknesses, and Dexter's no less than others. The pitiless Knapp goes even further in his revelation, which cannot be dismissed in any true

account. "When disappointed of his prey," Knapp vigorously asserts, "he would rave about his house and curse his family for joining in league against him. How wretched is the life of a dotard, in the pursuit of what he calls pleasure!"

Those were great days in Newburyport, days filled with worldly profits, religious debate and patriotic ardor. Trade was flourishing as it never would again. Parishioners were leaving the stricter churches and buying pews in others; Algerian pirates were preying on Mediterranean vessels; and lastly the French nation, once so friendly, was showing signs of definite hostility towards American merchants. Public-spirited men in Newburyport were raising large funds for the freeing of American sailors who languished in Algerian prisons, and talking loudly of another war. With practical energy, shipwrights, men of business, in fact nearly everyone in town, were contributing toward building a sloop of war to be named the Merrimack, whose guns, many fervently hoped, would soon roar off the coast of France. The Merrimack was to be presented fully equipped to the Federal government, and her hull already was well on the way toward

completion. Amidst such a flow of excitement there was plenty to talk about besides the curious doings of an obstreperous, intoxicated citizen. In fact a worse time could hardly be imagined for Dexter to impress the world, but nevertheless, by dint of sheer energy, he managed to impress it. France and Algiers were far away; it was slow work to watch a ship in the building, but from a "princely chateau" a short way up the street emanated wave after wave of wonder. Only a Dexter could have risen above national events, only a super-Dexter in his fullest power. He pushed France and the Bey of Algiers into the background of local thought, and furnished a relief for growing martial favor. By opening his grounds and welcoming visitors, Dexter had become a Public Figure; more than that, by the simple process of carrying matters to extremes, he was assuming a national importance.

Every day there was something new and unexpected. Poor Nancy Dexter had left her husband at last, and the child which had not blessed their union. Bishop was threatening divorce, on unpleasant statutory grounds, and Nancy was in Dexter's new house, so sadly bruised and beaten that all the

wrong could not have been hers, as Dexter knew right well. Taking the world into his confidence, Dexter confirmed the rumor by a public announcement in the press.

"Lite is come from the East" (undoubtedly it was

Sloop of War Merrimack

Dexter that was writing, but in a new and exalted style), "houe many wares my Clothes—swinglers—Abraham B one—a old coleage lant Coffed and all good men say Amen—but stop—as the big Roug is a good felow, go on Devil but dont bite me no more

—nor dont beat brouse poure Nancy my dafter—for I am alive as yet."

Nancy was bruised and suffering, to an extent, Dexter assured all who cared to listen, that caused her poor wits to scatter when "likker" was in her. "I be leave it," wrote Dexter, "that knows the trouth: the blǫue he gave her on the side, she had to put plasters on her side neare three years—I be Leave if my father, the presedente knowe the holl trouth of A bs treatment of my dafter, from her mouth, the grat man would shed tears with greafe, and all peopel like wise; shoking is the A fare." Grief and tears, and rage at Bishop, however, could not crush his dispositon, nor could bad debts or requests for money. He made a gesture at selling his shares in the Essex Merrimack Bridge, and publicly demanded, ("being in want of money," said Dexter) that all debts should be paid him forthwith; but, Dexter never quite forgot the rôle he played. He was the first lord in America.

No sooner had Dexter purchased the Jackson estate than all the world could see that a lord was in it and one of no mean calibre. On the corners of the square roof and in many other spots minarets began

to arise surmounted by shining gold balls that flaunted their lustre insolently upon the broad street. Though he said he was short of money, it was clear he had gold still left to spend. In the gardens and about the lawn the passersby also noticed increased activities. Not content with what the foreign artists had done for the grounds of his new home, Dexter himself was taking a hand to make them in all ways more fitting, until the place was becoming, what it was soon to prove, the untrammelled expression of a single man's desire for all things splendid. At various strategic points on the broad lawns to the front and rear of his white house, he planted trees and shrubbery of an exotic sort, especially imported from Europe. They fared so well that the grounds are scattered still with the living remains of Dexter's fancy. Two stunted umbrella trees of a venerable girth still obtrude their gnarled branches before the curious gaze, almost as odd specimens of life as the man who planted them. Further off a pepper tree, a gingko, and an outlandish form of chestnut also wave their leaves in happy memory of the being who summoned them from distant soils. There was small wonder that idle folk crowded to the fence to see,

that trotting horses were pulled down to a walk, and that other vehicles stopped entirely to discharge gaping passengers. More curious than the trees was the man they beheld walking about the paths, a bright-eyed, restless old man who was growing slightly gray, in a huge cocked hat, followed by a grub-like, hairless, creature more like a pig than a dog; a strutty, but merry gentleman who exchanged coarse badinage with onlookers and as likely as not invited them in to partake of plums or a glass of rum. It was not every day that one could look on a lord, much less converse with one so freely. "Look at those trees," the man of mystery once remarked when in a thoughtful mood, for like all great philosophers he could draw wisdom from every side of nature, "there are no two of them alike; no two men now going along the street are alike; there are two of nothing alike." It was Dexter, the Horticulturist, who made that sage remark. He was not always a successful horticulturist, however, for not all things did well in "saint James his Park." "Dont brak the Chane," he has exhorted his fellow countrymen, "Renoue brotherly love—Never fade like my box in my garding."

But it was more, far more, than a Philosopher and Horticulturist that the world was seeing then. Dexter, the Artist, was coming to the fore, the fancier of beauty, not only living but inanimate. All sorts of things were happening about this august and inspired dwelling; a painter's scaffolding was up before it; the whole house was receiving a coat of white, tastefully trimmed with brilliant green, where the trimming best would show, until it was all as fine as a "fiddle." And next the world beheld another sight which made it rub its eyes. Atop of the cupola an eagle made his appearance, the huge gold eagle which is still there today. He was not a mere ornament, for he had his use; he turned on an axis according to the wind, making as patriotic a weather vane as the world might wish to see. The execution is attributed to a most brilliant young man named Joseph Wilson, a young ship carver, who had recently come to Newburyport to ply his trade, and never did Wilson do finer work. "Show him a crows Neast," declared his gratified patron, "he can carve one—A fine fellow." In a short time Dexter was to strain this fine fellow's capacities to their limit, but he always loved the eagle, and has spoken of him

tenderly more than once, as one of his mansion's most capital adornments.

Not only outside, but within doors, too, great works were marching, all bearing witness that a man without background or inheritance to aid him was drawing on his own imagination to make a seat fitting for his genius. Dexter must have known what he was about, for he sent to France for furnishings; and selected as agents men of impeccable taste. Into the doors came mirrors and furniture designed by David's pencil; the windows he hung with majestic brocades rich in color and texture; the counterpanes on the beds were once the property of the very Marie Antoinette whom he had sought to shelter. Though ignorant from birth, he apparently did not miss a single trick in his battle with polite elegance. It appears that he dispatched an agent abroad to buy paintings and, it is said, this agent, another man of taste, actually returned with old masters. He should have known much better—he was not dealing with a common plodder afraid to express his mind. Dexter found all the dingy masters most distasteful, and said so with shocking frankness, ending by demanding something new by equally famous men. At

this juncture one of the "jolly souls," who were always on hand and anxious to be of use suggested marking the more pleasing paintings with some great master's name. Thus upon the palace walls appeared a Correggio, a Guido, a Raphael and a Titian, whose paint was hardly dry.

"Clear Nature," we have heard him say, "has been my schoolmaster, nothing borrowed by reading a very little," but Dexter knew the value of the printed word. "Good common larning," he has stated, "is the best; sum good books is best, well under stood." Yet, even here, he was willing to make a concession. His house, he had determined, was to be a grand house, so he purchased a library according to his lights, much as many other rich men have purchased libraries since. Cabinets of books appeared in the palace that glittered with gold tooling, and what more could Dexter do? Guests could pull them from their places, if they wished, and treat them with light respect, and Dexter did not mind. As far as his library was concerned, he used it, one gathers, for sheer pleasure, seeking solace in prints and passages of doubtful moral tone, still depending on clear Nature for more solid information.

Up to this point in the domestic arrangements of his conspicuous and noble palace Dexter aped the usual rich and vulgar. Only in the use of his appointments did he differ. He was not a man to be awed by royal furniture or books. All good things he knew were to be used, and the Dexters were hard upon their furniture, especially Dexter himself when in the throes of literary composition. "My peopel," he confesses, "complane of bakker spittel." This not unreasonable complaint regarding the habits of our sage seems to have come chiefly from the women of the house whose remonstrances, from all that we can gather, had little effect. Dexter and his son Samuel used the choicest apartments for literary work and serious drinking. "This mansion," says the horrified Knapp, "once the abode of a wise and elegant man now became a pest house and not unfrequently a bagnio." Books were strewn here and there on the floor and on the furniture until all was in chaos, but over the whole turbulent domain a man was ruling capable of dominating any stricken field and changing even a rout of Comus into an immortal victory.

Just as the plate and furniture and art dazzled

the local eye, so did the equipment of Dexter's stable, for once again Lord Dexter lived up to his station regardless of expense. As in the case of his eagle it is probable that he had recourse to local talent, since he would have been obliged to travel far indeed to find better coach makers than the neighborhood of Newburyport could produce. This trade of carriage making, with its requirements for skilled woodworkers, naturally flourished in a shipbuilding community, as it still flourishes today in Amesbury, across the river, although in an altered form. Dexter's coach, it is said, was a graceful piece of work when it was through, but it remained for Dexter to make it different from all other coaches, by stamping it with his glory. Not forgetting that he was a lord, he searched a book of heraldry for suitable arms, and selected several of the more artistic noble quarterings, which he caused to be painted forthwith upon his coach door in a glorious parody of pomp, that was beyond all servile diffidence. His coach was drawn by a pair of elegantly matched cream-colored horses, so elegantly caparisoned that, when Dexter chose to roll abroad in this equipage, small boys would pause to shout "huzza!"

It was not only small boys who shouted. Though this aspect is neglected by historians, it would seem that all good people of the jovial sort that love a pretty show shouted "huzza" also; and well they might, for never was there a more preposterous display. It was the beginning of a farce, that was so little checked by doubt, that was so brave and so utterly careless of the thoughts of plodding mortals that it transcended farce and reached the magnificence of legend. Surely those were merry days. No inspired oil king, no other lucky profiteer of war, has brought an equal talent to bear in their struggles to surpass Dexter's exploits. No essayist in the Latin tongue ever discovered an equal to Dexter in the gold-strewn streets of Rome. Newburyport has done many things of note, but it remained for her more jolly and irresponsible souls to nurture what now is in many ways her greatest ornament. It must have been very jolly souls indeed who once again elected the first lord of America Informer of Deer in 1798. Dexter's name is still on the town records for that year, furnishing better evidence than any other excerpt from town records, that at least a certain section of Newburyport was gay.

Nor did the jolly souls stop there. Even the staid Impartial Herald got the swing of things, giving Dexter's statements to the world at large a readier welcome. Dexter's mind was not confined to the improvements of his palace,—the "supposed improvements" as his biographer has ironically put it. He launched into the realm of politics; he translated world events; and even pried into domestic economy. Nothing, it appears, was too great or too small for his embracing genius. "Nater," Dexter confessed, "gave me to doue good to my week brothers." He was not a man to forget the charge the stars had laid upon him. Instead he proceeded to do his very best within the limits "Nater" had set him.

"Fellow mortals," Dexter exhorted his townsmen while he was in the very midst of operations on his palace, "why is so much money thrown away on mourning, and tails of women's gowns which drag on the ground about our streets a quarter of a yard. The chance is against us for a war, let us be saving money for it. . . . Fellow mortals think on these things—from your well wisher. T. D."

"By desire," explains the Herald primly, "the spelling in the above was corrected."

It would seem, in all truth, that there was nothing his mind could not compass in his new hunt for activity. Up at the Jackson house while Dexter was writing, supervising, planting and painting, thinking of gold eagles and books and the weakness of man, he could still pause, and give his mind to profit. Not even a lord's ambitions and duties could keep him from buying and selling. Once back in Newburyport, Dexter offered for sale on easy payment "twenty eight thousand feet board measure, of yellow pine timber, eight thousand feet joist, seven thousand feet dry board!" What other genius but Napoleon's itself could have turned to boards in this flood tide of greatness?

So astonishing a man was bound to gather astonishing friends, and to the palace they flocked, a motley and not infrequently a godless crew. There was the assiduous Plummer, for one, with an ego that was swelling like his master's. A schoolmaster, bearing the mystic name of "John P.," whose identity seems difficult to discover, was another guiding light. As might be expected, he was a man of extraordinary views, with an odd sense of humor, gifted with a vague knowledge of astrology which Dexter loved

to hear. From the lower reaches of the town came Madam Hooper, reputed to be a witch, who had a hen for a familiar, and a double set of teeth. She had been during the French and Indian wars, in the British camp, and though she could handle a broadsword like a man, and gave distinct evidences of a gentle bringing-up, this remarkable woman lived by telling fortunes, which occupation her native wit rendered most profitable. Lucy Lancaster, a gigantic negress of queenly bearing, "brave as any man or woman could be," also made her appearance, and seems to have hovered over the active lord like a kindly guardian. In Lucy, Dexter recognized an equal; and not without reason bided by her advice, for Lucy was no ordinary African. Her father was reputed to have been a prince, taken in his first battle, and Lucy permitted no other negro to cross her threshold. Lucy was a match for Dexter, for the "ghost," and Samuel, and the distracted Nancy all in one. She developed into a benign and powerful major domo, who gave the house what order there was in it. Of all this strange, fantastic group, it was Lucy Lancaster who best perceived a great man's light, perhaps because of her royal heritage. Lucy

alone always assured the world that Dexter was a man of sense, but prone to give way to restlessness and animal spirits.

Such were the more constant visitors in Dexter's strange domain, but there were others, finally so many others, that again the lord's life took on the distracting perplexities of Chester. Groups of irresponsible young men and country girls began appearing on the grounds, who treated him with something less than respect, even begging for locks of his fast graying hair, until on one occasion his locks were well nigh snipped off him altogether. According to the thoughtful Knapp, however, he may, on this occasion, have been wearing a wig. In those merry days, such a practical cast of humor as appearing in a wig seems to have been one of his lordship's most cherished occupations. Never was it more obvious to him that a "good laugh" was better than crying, and more likely than not angry words across the table frequently gave way, with another touch of wine, to peal upon peal of laughter.

Yet even in the palace he was so long in making, the miserable law of averages was ruthlessly at work, and peace could not be with him. If the jolly ele-

ment of Newburyport was kind, as we suspect, other sections of the community continued their unasked attention. In the swarm of admirers, also appeared the beggars, importunately demanding charity, and, worse than beggars, the cheats and the charlatans. Even today the small boys of Newburyport are a venturesome crew, which still disturbs the local watch. In Dexter's time, judging from what he suffered, they were even more pestiferous and, worse yet, too uneducated to respect a nobleman's estate. They not only disturbed him when he crowned his poet, but made continual forays on his house and garden, such as had previously shaken the Tracy mansion from cellar to attic, and had empurpled him with rage. Always in the background of his activities is this din of guerilla warfare growing more acute. Despite his most vigorous exertions, rare fruits and choice vegetables had a way of disappearing over night and of appearing again at the town's further limits, in so mysterious a manner that Madam Hooper herself could not tell exactly what had happened. The raptures rare that combined to bless and crown "saint James his street" proved incapable of preventing certain black boys of the

colored quarter from pulling off whole sections of the garden paling. Nor did these same raptures crown the worthless Samuel with further grace, or keep Madam Dexter "that was" in a beatific mood. More and more the ceaseless connubial wranglings with a woman who could not understand him, and the tearful complaints of a wretched daughter were wearing on his existence. It was all growing too confused. "My old head," poor Dexter once confided in one of his less humorous moments, "has wore out three boddeys; it would take a jourey of Doctors one our to find and Count the scars on my head, given by the gost & others"—proving that words were not all that were exchanged in the Dexter palace. Though that rare old head was never better, it was true about the body. Alas, already it was in a state where no known group of consulting physicians could make it whole.

Physical weakness was making shocks and outrages harder to withstand. Again and again they caused his self-control to leave him and combined with wine to throw him into a royal, though not lasting, rage. Now that the columns of the paper were so freely opened, the public was edified by traces of

this transient anger, which reached such a climax that he began to evince a passionate desire to shake off all burdens, to sell his house so recently acquired, to sell everything connected with his life.

"Take Notice," wrote Dexter at a suitable time for manifesting independence, it being July 3, 1798, "I inform Men, Women, and Children not to trouble me with their pretended friendship in coming to beg my earnings in no shape whatever—nor to get my Fruit, for I have none to give away, and if they steal it they must suffer by the Law. Furthermore I mean to sift all Rogues and Vagabonds in and about Newburyport, for it is not a time to let lazy people live in their idleness:—if they are poor, let them go to work, or they must be sent to some proper place—France or Guinea.

"A well-wisher T. Dexter.

"N. B. Please to understand me right—a few good friends that will come to see me or the old lady out of friendship—not for what they can get—my heart is with them—they are welcome—come with true love with good hearts.

"Amen

"I don't swear, I affirm, I will not pay any more towards the Ship, as long as you Newburyport folks keep those black thieves on the back of the town, stealing my fence and my neighbors' both winter and summer. I mean to try to sell my House and Horses and Carriages and household Furniture at a moderate price. Payment made easy.

"T. Dexter."

Thus we see how true it is that even the most fortunate have their ups and downs, and that a palace does not necessarily make a home when the level tenor of existence is disturbed. Yet, pleasantly enough, there is a joyful sequel to this latest of our hero's many complaints. At this juncture Newburyport took notice in a royal way, perceiving at last that here was a man whose every turn of expression was a curious verbal flower, eluding all definition. Scarcely had this declaration appeared than a poet saw its rarity, and turned it into a parody printed in the local press—so good-natured, yet so appreciative that it could not have failed to soften an irate man's heart. Upon reading it Dexter could no longer feel that his deeds were entirely vain. Already they were a part of song and story.

Attend, ye miscreants far and near—
Great Dexter speaks—and all should hear:—
E'en men and women, girls and Brats,
Hogs, dogs, and puppies, Cats and Rats—
Hear what (enraged) I say—and then
Act like yourselves—or beasts or men!
No more with canting looks pretend
To call on me as my great friends
"To beg my earnings"—justly due
To Dexter's self, and not to you;
My fruits, too precious, too refined
To give away—I'm not so kind.
And if you dare a cherry steal
The vengeance of the law you'll feel.
All rogues that here about resort
Or lounge in streets of Newburyport
I mean to sift—that lazy crew
Should *work*, as I myself was wont to do.
'Tis not a time, you may believe,
For idle folks to idle live
They all should work or take their chance
Of voyage to Guinea—or to *France!*
But please to understand me right
True friends are welcome to my sight.
To them politely I'll display
My house, my plate, etcetera.
Or should they wish my *wife* to see
They're welcome both to her and me.
But then they must not—vile t'endure,
Attend—if motives are not pure—
If all they want is to obtain
Some pittance small from my domain.

But such whose hearts beat to the lay
Of love are welcome night or day.
I do not swear—although I'm mad
"But I affirm" (almost as bad)
That for the Federal Ship, though willing
I will not pay one single shilling
Unless the folks in Newburyport
Will check those blacks who now resort
Back of the town and thence
Make dreadful *havock* of my fence—
My house—my horses neat and trim,
(Fit only for the great Sir Tim)
I mean to sell—*My Eagle too!*
And Carriages—I have but two—
My price is mod'rate, 'tis no whim,
For terms, apply to Great Sir Tim.

CHAPTER IX

In which Lord Dexter Astonishes Mankind with a Rehearsal of his Funeral, gives the Whole World a remarkable Museum, and becomes himself First in the East.

IT may have been the poem or it may have been through circumstance, that Dexter remained within his house, to continue toward still greater deeds. Now, however, we must pause awhile from jest, to think of more serious things. For, even in the beginning of rearing his establishment, now and then Dexter allowed himself to be melancholy in a great poetic way.

Out of a mass of curious and incoherent reminiscence which surrounds, like a glorious but misty diadem, this golden age of Dexter, when all his thoughts at last bear fruit, it is increasingly difficult to keep to fact, for there are so many things to tell. There is an unexplained resilience about him which brought him up from the blackest Slough of

Despond. It is a sort of superhuman humor which he brought to all his gravest acts to render them hilarious—consciously or unconsciously we shall never know!—yet in the lugubrious exhibition, which it is now our lot to analyze, it grows increasingly hard to believe that Dexter did not adorn it purposely with some of his good nature. It is too Gargantuan in its proportions to admit of unalloyed seriousness, and Dexter, now and again, was a jovial lord, as his followers well knew. He was also a generous lord, and, in spite of his eloquent complaints, capable of considerable kindness. He gave, now and again, generously of his cherries and other fruits, and equally generously of his wines and liquors, if he was civilly approached. He permitted musicians to play in his cupola beneath the eagle's wings; and so, by these and similar actions, it became known that Lord Dexter had his good points. All things in Dexter's house, however sad, were diverting, even to a funeral. Now and again it would almost seem that Dexter wished it so—and genuinely felt he lived to give amusement to all the world, and loved to be a clown who could laugh with the spectators who watched his antics.

Once embarked on the idea of selling his house Dexter did not stop with a single threat; he endeavored to sell his house more or less consistently to the very end of his span, thus acting like many other splenetic and gouty old gentlemen. In fact, whenever affairs displeased him, he seems to have hit upon the unoriginal solution of putting his house, his horses, his plate, in fact all his possessions into the market. There was a melancholy satisfaction in the act, which every artist knows who has been tempted to destroy his work, that evidently gave solace to this peculiar, weary man. It is in one of these advertisements that we get an intimation of a new and serious phase of his character. Oddly enough, the literal process of putting his house on sale reveals that our hero was pondering on the phenomenon of death, and preparing, like the Egyptians, to meet his end in state.

"In one of the banks of the garden," says this advertisement, as though offering princely bait for some future occupant, "is an elegant new Tomb, on the top of which is erected the Temple of Reason, twelve feet square, eleven feet high, with a hundred and fifty-eight squares of glass in it."

Such is the accuracy of Dexter. With spelling he may not have been conversant, but he could always juggle figures; where his possessions were concerned, he was a walking compendium of useful facts.

It is said that one of those friends who were always so ready with refreshing suggestions first led Dexter's mind from the gay to the grave, by speaking of famous historical characters who had arranged their last resting places that they might lie in state. If this is so, it is most characteristic. In his whole career, it would seem that Dexter was always in a receptive attitude, inclined to follow jovially the most bizarre advice. Indeed, curiously few of Dexter's really great acts have originated in his own mind. The warming-pans, the title of nobility, the Poet Laureate—all of them seem to have been the ideas of wags in the beginning, which Dexter's imagination seized upon avidly and carried to artistic absurdity. Those unbelievers who hinted that Dexter was losing what little wit he had should remember that two sides exist in every controversy. It is necessary to bear in watchful recollection this fact just mentioned,—that Dexter allowed friends to suggest nearly everything he did and then fol-

lowed the advice so promptly and thoroughly that the most hopeful must have been amazed at the great result. The character of Dexter presents two possibilities that defy hasty judgment. Either he was a simpleton whom any one might lead, or else his amenability to suggestion was the technique of a philosopher, whose scope of jesting surpasses all records, a philosopher who knew the world so well that he turned his life with all its tribulations into one great jest for the edification of all mankind. If so, no brighter light was ever brought "week" brothers.

If the building of the Tomb was an outside suggestion, it was carried off with a flourish and finesse which only Dexter, the Worker of Wonders, could impart. Who has ever conceived a tomb with the (not "a" but "the") Temple of Reason on top of it, exactly twelve feet square with one hundred and fifty-eight panes of glass? Who else could possibly have done so? During the year 1799, his rarest genius was bent upon that tomb, which received all his tenderest care, even to the supplying of a coffin to go inside it. The familiar and rather boring act of eccentric old men and women who keep their

coffins ready in their homes, was relieved by many bizarre and beautiful precautions. A cabinet maker was hired whose shop Dexter frequently visited, with his dog tagging at his heels, while the coffin was in progress; and when the work was over, Dexter himself came with a man and a wheelbarrow, and walked behind his new coffin proudly as it rumbled along the street. It was all too splendid not to let mankind at large know of it. Dexter let them know with generous and public-spirited pride. "I have a grand Toume," he announced, "in my garding and my coffin made and all Ready in my hous—panted with whit Lead inside and outside, tuched with greane, with brass trimmings eight handels and a good lock."

There have been other descriptions of the coffin by other hands but none so explicit or laden with mystic wonder as Dexter has achieved, with a few well-chosen words, surpassing his historians' politer language. "Nobel trimmings," he has added affectionately, "uncommon Lock, so I can take the kee in side, and have fier works in the toume, pipes & tobaker & A speaking trumpet, and a bibel to read and sum good songs."

These genial and comfortable preparations for a long rest might have seemed sufficient to most of us, but not for this super-Dexter. The tomb was too beautiful and all its equipment too perfect for Dexter to leave it idle, and thus his brain hit on a further elaboration, the ingenuity of which in itself would make the name of Dexter famous. He actually conceived the idea of a funeral while alive, and—need one add that it was an idea seconded by all in Newburyport with a love of things remarkable? The whole plan made a delightful holiday such as Newburyport has never seen again. Before its gaiety even the welcome to Washington paled, if we are to believe Dexter's own description. Though he stated specifically that it was a "mock founnel," nothing was left undone. There was a mock minister to officiate, undoubtedly with a highly eulogistic address. There were mock pallbearers of exalted rank. Some one had evidently thought of Lord North as a fitting mourner, for this British peer was there, assisted by other Lords named by the points of the compass and stationed at each of the handles, thus forming a symbolic group. Also in the hall was a plentiful supply of all things necessary to relieve the mournful note,

of which undoubtedly all partook with the usual freedom, not excluding the corpse himself—who now turned himself as he had turned poor Lady Dexter into a ghost for the occasion.

Dexter stated that "about 3,000 spectators" were present at the services and interment. For this once, his love of show must have deceived him, or, being a ghost himself, he saw groups of envious shades invisible to others. Since the population of Newburyport was then only 6,000, the 3,000 spectators would have been half the town, surely too many in spite of the occasion's merits. But the assembled multitude, if not so large as the corpse supposed, did excellently well. If Dexter is to be further believed, the occasion was tinged with gloom and so solemn that there was "very much criing."

We might know much more since, more remarkable than the funeral, is the corpse's account, that was once intact, but is now rudely mangled by the printer, who threw it out in mid career. "The A bove mock founnel," wrote the deceased, "the grand pallholders or bärers Nams—Lord East, Lord West, Lord North, Lord South, Lord megul (can it be Mogul?) Lord Shambow—the minister made the

prayer was Doctor Strong, three saxtons—flimsee ones—are"—

It is the printer speaking now, "unavoidably omitted."

Few things are more annoying than interrupted literature, and this vandalism can only lead to one conclusion. There still existed people in Newburyport who did not believe that Dexter was great among the great. It remains for legend to finish the account, in a manner for once as remarkable as the original. The funeral procession, we are told, passed across the garden with the lords, not excepting the mysterious "megul" and "shambow," working manfully to hold the casket, moved as they were by the kind words of good "Doctor Strong." Why the sextons were flimsy is mysterious, unless by this time they were unsteady on their feet, but they too did their work. The procession with the green and white coffin arrived at the Temple of Reason, and the vault was opened and the casket placed inside. On the way back to the house more than one of the downcast mourners saw the shade of Dexter peering from an upper window, but those who saw have neglected a vital point. No one has said whether or

not the First Lord of America was laughing. Events that immediately ensued, however, show he was full of spirit and far from dead as yet. As the mourners assembled in the hall, doubtless to enjoy further refreshments to revive their drooping spirits they were interrupted by loud noises in the back of the house. Out in the kitchen ghost was meeting ghost. Dexter was beating his wife, because the poor lady had not shed tears enough at his premature decease.

This horrid parody of a solemn event must have been a shocking jolt to a New England community, and a puzzling thing as well. Perhaps it is the greatest Dexterian extravagance now extant, almost too bizarre to be real. After listening to the strange reports and hearing echoes of the dissensions which continually rent the Dexter house, many must have wondered, as posterity does now, whether he had wholly lost his head; yet Dexter continued on his way, building a reputation regardless of what was said. He had reason to think of death, at any rate. Though not far past fifty, he was rapidly growing old and paying for the pleasure of his wine. Gout, nerves, and headaches, he confessed, were playing

havoc with him. In all his excitement he had a wish to be "still and master of his cash," although surely he must have known that stillness would never be his until the green and white coffin claimed him at last.

There was nothing which could keep him quiet; an inhuman perversity was in him to keep the center of the stage. Like a weary, plodding traveler, his mind led him on, bewitched, to further wondrous doings, until his name is written in strange places. Nevertheless, he still displayed flashes of business acumen, even in the midst of funerals. He was still busy at buying and selling and, no matter what men thought, Dexter was Dexter still when it came to a sharp trade. He still had his wits about him, and even in his lifetime, and it was hard to judge his curious capacity.

For example, his fancies might have been phenomenal, but he was strictly honest, and none of his detractors have discovered him evading a bargain, which is more than can be said of many quieter men. He was most scrupulous in all financial dealings. Though he complained bitterly about money and debts which were owed to him, though his house and

his own life were disordered, there is no record of twisted accounts or of debtors pounding at his gates. If anyone was sharp enough to outwit him, and certainly after the funeral many must have tried, Dexter never complained. The laborers and artisans, the dealers and shopkeepers, who came to his house all went away contented, though sometimes wiser than when they came. Dexter loved a sharp bargain, but he always paid. It is said that he insisted so strongly on paying, that once when there was sickness in the house, and when a certain clergyman who was summoned refused to take a fee for his call, Dexter threatened him with a horse pistol until the startled divine consented! If Diogenes had met a Dexter he might well have put his lantern out, for here, no matter what his "lite" might be, was a very honest man.

Going further still, it seems that even his complaints concerning the "whiners and grunters" were more good natured than otherwise, and written with an anger that was tolerant, for they continued knocking on the door. He did not even wax too angry at those who attempted to take his "loaves and fishes" because he was a fool, and even regarding his son-in-

law he has admitted that the "Roug was a good fellow." In fact, there is a certain friendly tolerance in all his writing, which betokens a generous nature, not averse to charity. "Yesterday," says the Newburyport paper a few months after the community had witnessed the trial burial, "a valuable bell, 'The gift of Timothy Dexter Esq., to the 2nd Presbyterian Society of Newburyport' was fixed in the steeple of the house of worship of that Society. The liberality and public spirit of the donor in this and many other instances reflect much honor on him. His generosity has been directed by a discriminating judgment. It may hereafter become proverbial to say 'generous as DEXTER.' "

In all honor to his memory, this is perfect truth; though there may be a veiled irony in the paragraph, the journalistic sarcasm then existing was generally of a more elephantine sort. It is in keeping with the puzzle of his nature that Dexter made himself conspicuous as a philanthropist at the very time all these other remarkable events were erupting. If his gifts usually had the same proviso attached which was appended to his offer of a market hall, they were nevertheless handsome. The bell had "The gift of

Timothy Dexter Esq." cast upon it. In Saint Paul's Church there hung for many years a memorandum that he had given to that body also a sum of one hundred pounds for the improvement of the edifice. Dexter also offered to pave the whole of High Street, if it should be named for him, but the town refused the second offer as it had the first. Finally, he filled the large hollow in the same street near his own house at his own expense, at no small good to the general public. His detractors have brought up the undoubted truth that all Dexter's gifts seemed calculated to give permanent fame to the donor. In the light of rich men's past and present generosities this seems a mild indictment, a rule rather than the exception in dispensing charity, though contrary to scriptural precept.

It is said that no gifts of Dexter gave him the respect of men, women, or even of children. It is truly curious that anyone should pause for so obvious a remark regarding a man who was above the public censure of his times. Popularity, not respect, was what Timothy Dexter wanted, popularity and kindly treatment, which he got in such measure that even the scandalous episode of the funeral was

absorbed with good nature by the whole community. A tolerance for him was growing up which can only be explained by Dexter's possessing a gentle nature and a kind heart. In spite of the strange doings at his palace, Newburyporters discovered that Dexter stood ready to help good causes and that he was a harmless man, who bore the world no malice and whose antics did but little harm. To the everlasting credit of Newburyport, and to the freedom of the age he lived in, Timothy Dexter was left alone to do exactly as he pleased, to hold funerals, to bestow charity and to do still finer things. His work was not finished yet, and Newburyport was to reap its own reward. A bell, a tomb, an eagle and a temple of reason were only the beginning, the bare foundation for Dexter's greatest deeds.

In all we have seen the Dexterian genius achieve is a love of the extraordinary, the garish and the gay, a striving for great effects which not even his ignorance could hamper, but which instead added to their marvel. No matter how time has showered him with ridicule, there is none the less an indefinable splendor in everything he did. As we come to Dex-

ter's vastest display, all tawdry thoughts must vanish before a lavishness which is almost like Lorenzo's, and more reminiscent of the Renaissance than of early America. The year of 1801 was passing, not a time of great picturesqueness in the nation where he lived; but in 1801 Dexter mounted to the summit of his genius.

In 1801 he conceived the purpose of giving the world nothing less than a museum, containing all the greatest characters of human history, of decorating his palace fence, his lawns and gardens with actual life-size images of all the men and women who were great! It was more than a museum of history—it was a museum of himself, such as only he would dare to contemplate. It was the lion of his State Street days and the mock funeral raised to mightier proportions, and it contained, like many others of his schemes, its own distorted thread of common sense. Of all things we might least expect, the Essex Merrimack Bridge was mixed up in it. Being a shareholder in the Bridge and vitally interested in its tolls, it actually occurred to Dexter's astuteness that his own display might add to the bridge profits, and that by executing a feat he longed

to try, he could reconcile his business acumen and his love of splendor at a single stroke. If he could render his palace still more wonderful in the eyes of man, if people would flock from the north country to see it, the bridge tolls would increase and he would be the richer. Not only this, but the business of the town would be greatly aided by an influx of visitors.

The strange involutions and convolutions of Dexter's brain were again at work. Though his chroniclers mention this huge extravagance without excuse, and point again to a failing intellect, a qualifying slyness lurks within it. Never did Dexter know better what he wanted than when he thought of a museum. It is all so very strange and unrelated to common eccentric whims that only Timothy Dexter could possibly have managed the undertaking. Only Dexter has ever combined madness, sanity, and the ridiculous in such unique proportion. It was a vindication of all his past life and lack of previous experiments, the golden age of his thought.

Though financial gain may not have been his greatest purpose, it is one of the reasons which Dexter has given for the execution of the monster

plan he suddenly hatched of changing his house from a gentleman's estate to the Greatest Show on Earth, and filling his grounds with scores of images, until his dwelling was not a house at all but a fantasy, his own vast dream of elegance. Dexter has given another reason for so doing, equally cogent and possibly more to the point.

"I wants," he explained, "to make my Enemys grin, in time, Like a Cat over A hot pudding, and goe away, and hang there heads Down Like a Dogg bin After sheep."

Now we are acquainted somewhat with his methods, a further though unwritten reason presents itself. The first lord of America was a dynamo of energy, which gout and nerves had yet to conquer. He could not stay still. Whether he wished to or not, he had to follow his light which automatically was bound to make him great. Once he was reputed to have said that he believed his soul would pass into a darning needle, for darning needles were such restless insects. For this reason no one was permitted to kill a darning needle in his presence.

With the idea of a museum he finally found full scope for his energy. Joseph Wilson, who had

carved the eagle, was called into conference, but at first Dexter's mind was on a more permanent medium than wood. He actually had thoughts of placing marble figures about his grounds with the profusion of Roman Emperors. Like other large ideas it appears to have grown from small beginnings. First, by all we can gather from his own words, he only contemplated a few decorations—yet enough to surprise the world.

"The 3 presidents," Dexter announced in the press. Here was news at last to interest the world, and the Herald gave it space. "Doctor franklin John hen Cock and Mr. hamelton and Rouffous king and John Jea—2 grenadars on the top of the hous, 4 Lions below; 1 Eagel *is* on the Coupulow, one Lamb to lay down with one of the Lions—one younecorne, one Dogg, Addam and Eave in the Garden—one horse. The houll is not concluded as yet—Dexter's Mouseum."

Little imagination is required to visualize the expectant thrill of excitement which buzzed through the community at this surprising announcement. Agog with curiosity, visitors began asking questions and making suggestions, until Dexter seems to have

grown a trifle confused with the very vastness of his own thoughts. When the press seized upon the announcement, it had seized without Dexter's intention upon the mere skeleton of the plan. Only later did the public have a chance to realize that the proposed figures were not disjointed fancies. The lamb and the lion were to be symbols of international accord. The three presidents were to hold a place of honor on an arch. To correct misapprehensions Dexter was obliged to correct himself publicly by a paid notice.

" 'Squire Dexter," it is explained, "has intimated he did not intend the paragraph in our paper respecting his Museum for publication—he had not actually determined on all the subjects mentioned, but he says "I *will* have George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and John Jay, and after all above mentioned is finished I *will if I please*, have Adam and Eve in my garden."

There was the true voice of the first lord of America—he would have anything he pleased and exactly the way it pleased him, and nothing short of the best was too good for his project. Without his

own explanation to aid us, the figures before his house might very well seem like an ill-assorted conglomeration verging on madness, but fortunately the whole plan, thus hastily started, was taking definite shape. It was to be a museum, nothing less, dedicated to the great remembrance of George Washington, lately deceased, to show Dexter's admiration for the father of his country and for all great "caricters," whether ancient or modern. Whatever may be said of the final result, it was a gallant undertaking.

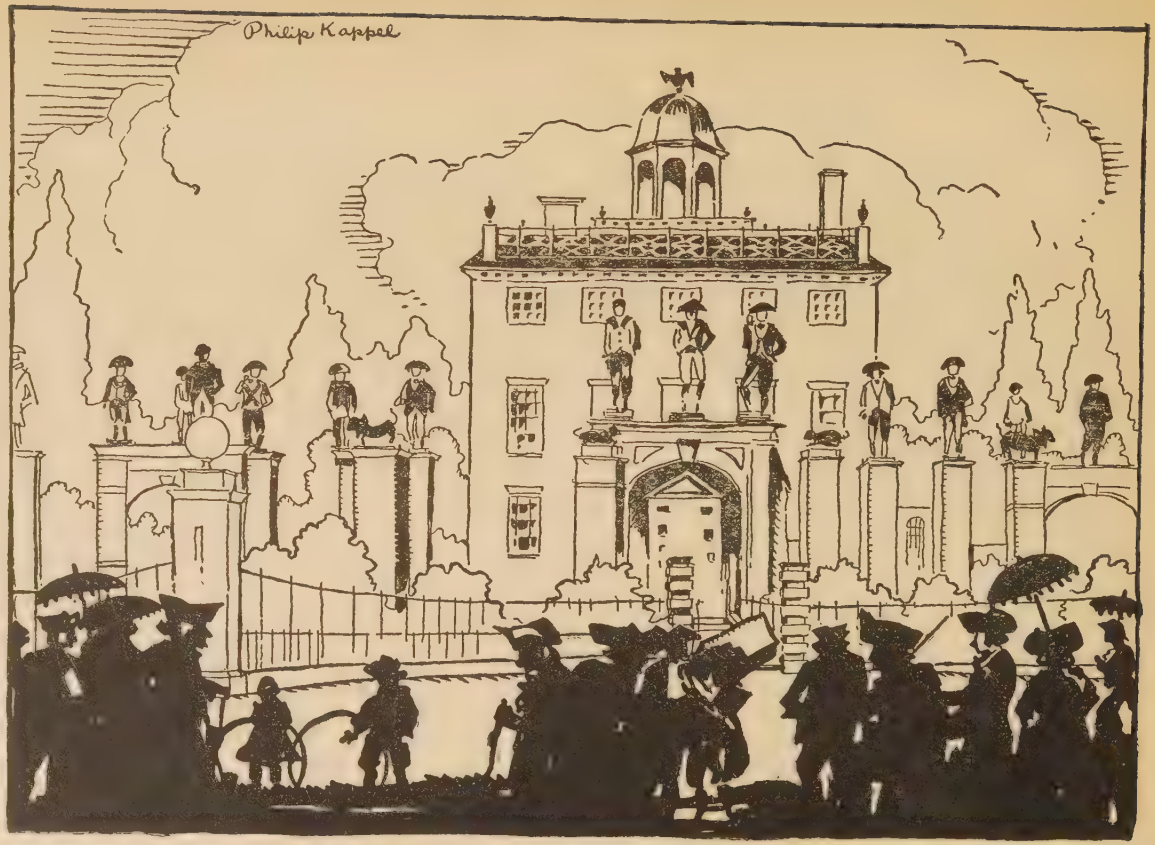
"I will shoue the world," Dexter announced speaking like one inspired, "one of the Grate Wonders of the world, in 15 months, if No man murders me in Dors or out of Dors."

Indeed, it seemed as though there might be murder, so great was the revolt in his house. Madam Dexter seems to have been often away during the whole epoch of constructing the museum, without her absence bringing much peace. Samuel Dexter was waxing more obstreperous than ever in his demands for money, carrying his requests and personalities to the extreme of threats. It was a difficult background. Dexter was like an unhappy ruler

engaged in waging an outside war and forced at the same time to quell revolts within his own territory. Yet, undaunted, he still continued.

"Forder, hear me good Lord," he piously added, "I am going to Let our shildren know—Now to see, good Lord, what has bin in the world grate wase back, to our own forefathers, Not old Plimeth, but stop—to Addom & Eave—to sho 45 figers, two Leged and fore Leged, becos we cant doue well without fore Leged; in the first plase they are our fude."

Thus in its broader aspect the museum is clear enough. Only in its details was the majesty of the plan puzzling. There was a rare symbolic significance in the grouping proposed, which has never been explained. It was some mysterious part of his philosophy, which he chose to represent in an expressionistic manner. There were to be four lions to defend the "grate and mighty" men, a lion for each point of the compass. The whole was to signify the unity of nations and the great concord of the earth. If we could only guess from his vague allusions, some vast piece of philosophic imagery might appear from Dexter's maze of men and animals. There would be good and evil, peace and war, love and hate, with



"Saint James, his park," the Last and Greatest Palace of the First Lord of America, High Street, Newburyport, Massachusetts

the Devil himself peeping slyly out, for a careful reading of Dexter's description gives full evidence that no child's play was there. Vaguely rolled into that museum, hidden from vulgar intelligence, was mysticism, and all his highest ambition, all his "lite," all his mental adornments, combined with scraps of information gleaned from jolly souls and double-teethed witches. It was more than a group of vulgar figures,—it was superstition and belief, and lofty endeavor and possibly humor too, concealed from the vulgar forever. Only the eagle is left to show it, but still the eagle is a power, an exotic bird, distinctly removed from common trends of thought. By the end of October in 1801, Dexter's plan for startling man had taken such definite shape that he was enabled to give a full account of it to the public. The mystical schoolmaster, or some other boon companion, or his poet, or his printer evidently helped, but the whole result is sufficiently remarkable to show the effect he wished, just as the full catalogue of figures betrays actual historical knowledge.

"Timothy Dexter, Esq., of Newburyport," says the announcement,—"is now erecting a museum which will (when completed) exceed in elegance and

grandeur anything of the kind in the United States to consist of the following marble Figures viz:

"Adam and Eve in their fig leaf dresses of the present white marble and finished in the highest style. Noah, dressed in the style and fashion of Antideluvian time. Abraham and Sarah, Abraham in a patriarchal style; Sarah represented as a very handsome woman, dressed in an elegant dress suitable to the times she lived in. Joseph, his head, hands, etc. of white marble, his drapery of the most beautiful variegated marble that can be purchased. Moses, the leader of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of Canaan, represented with his Rod in his hand. David, represented as a youth in a Shepperd's dress with a sling in his hand. Solomon represented as a young monarch dressed in the most superb and magnificent eastern style with his crown, sceptre, and the other insignia of his station. Hirum represented as an elderly monarch arrayed with all the habiliments of masonry and majesty. The goddess Venus of the finest white marble, polished and finished in the highest style. Three of the apostles viz —St. Paul, St. John and St. Peter. The immortal Washington, father and savior of his country, rep-

resented in Complete American uniform, with his hat on, leaning the right hand upon the hilt of his sword, with the point upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his hip. John Adams, late worthy president of the United States, represented standing in an easy graceful posture with his face looking a little to the left. Thomas Jefferson the present President of the United States represented in a similar posture to John Adams, except his face looking a little to the right.

"(The Presidents stand upon a platform, supported by two Corinthian Columns with an arch sprung from each column under the entablature upon which they stand.)

"Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the Philosopher and Statesman. John Haveloch, late governing Massachusetts. John Jay, late minister to the Court of Great Britain. Doctor Dwight, president of Yale College. Aaron Burr, vice president of the United States. Caleb Strong, governor of Massachusetts. John J. Gilman, governor of New Hampshire. Rufus King, minister plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James. Jonathan Jackson, Esq., the great Indian Chief Cornplanter, represented in complete Indian

dress with his Bow, Arrows, Tomahawk, moccasins, etc. Toussaïnt L'Ouverture, governor of St. Domingo, George III, King of Great Britain. The late William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. Lord Nelson Baron of the Nile, etc. Louis XVI, late king of France. Bonaparte, first Consul of France. Charles IV, king of Spain. Alexander I, Emperor of Russia. The king of Sweden. The king of Denmark. The king of Prussia. The Emperor of Germany. The grand signior of Constantinople. The Emperor of China, the great Mogul.

"The above figures are to be as large as life, each standing upon a block of marble 2 feet square and 6 inches thick. One marble lion standing with his fore and hind feet upon two blocks of marble.

"Two handsome English grayhounds of gray marble. Two Boys of white marble 3½ feet in height standing upon suitable marble blocks."

In all truth, Dexter has assured the world, those figures would have been marble, if he had been able to raise the price. Unfortunately for their subsequent preservation, wood was the medium finally hit upon, and Joseph Wilson was the artist. The demand for curious figure-heads on vessels had

equipped the latter admirably for his work; and there were also carpenters and painters equal to the strain. The first Lord of America became a dynamo of activity; "money," he naively confessed, "wont gitt thos figers so fast as I wish," but there is a reward for all effort. Long before the stipulated fifteen months were up, marvellous sights were startling mankind at large. In front of the once elegant and now efflorescent mansion appeared thirteen pillars, one for each original state, in a straight row, and fifteen feet in height. Directly before the front door appeared a "Royal arch" seventeen feet in height, surmounted, exactly as he had promised, by the three first presidents.

When those figures finally went up, Dexter saw one of the happiest days of his life, and the realization of perhaps his greatest dream. There is a veritable contagion in his excitement not yet eradicated by time.

"To mankind at large,"—one can almost feel the philosopher's hand shake as he grasped his pen.—"the time is come at last, the grate day of Regoising. What is that? Why I will tell you; Those three Kings is Raised, on the first Royal Arch in the World

—almost not quite; but very hie up—or so they are a good mark to be scene; so the womans Like to see the frount, & all peopel loves to see them; and the Quakers will Com & peape slyly & feele glad & say, houe thee doue, frind . . . the god of Nater has done very much for our present king; they are all very good. I want them to live forever, and I be leave they will."

His only disappointment was that the figures, when first up, were a blank white, but this was rapidly remedied. A painter familiar with figure-heads was called, who immediately set to work, though he was somewhat shaken at the outset by a violent altercation with his employer. On examining Thomas Jefferson's image it was found that he was holding a scroll of paper. This, Dexter informed the painter, was the Constitution of the United States, and desired that "Constitution" be painted clearly on the scroll. Hanging from a scaffolding which was secured to the president's neck, the painter objected strenuously. The paper, he said, which Jefferson was holding, was the Declaration of Independence, as every one knew. Finally, as the argument waxed hotter, Dexter discovered that

his employee was actually painting the letters "DEC—." The word got no further, for the first Lord of America rushed into the house, emerged with a horse pistol, and actually discharged it upwards toward the arch. Thus the argument ended. DEC was painted out, and Jefferson henceforth held the Constitution in his hand.

The three presidents were magnificently colored, as were other figures which soon made their appearance. From the conflicting reports of the number, it is impossible to count them with exactness, but it seems certain that they exceeded forty. They were in the front and rear of the house, and rising from the shrubbery and exotic trees: a sight to make everyone pause and stare. The names of those that have come down to us indicate that Dexter continued on his proposed scheme with the single exception of using wood rather than marble. There were four lions, and also a lamb, two grenadiers, King Louis XVI, Bonaparte, Venus, the great Indian Cornplanter, a strolling Preacher, a representation of Motherly Love, Governor Gilman of New Hampshire, and many others. Their names were difficult to determine because Dexter frequently had them painted

out and new ones substituted, as his fancy prompted. It was his just prerogative to do so. They were the figures of his own creation, men, beasts, and bird, and lived, a part of a world which he had called into reality, and which was his alone to govern. There was one name, however, which he left untouched. On a pedestal near the front fence, and readily visible from the road, was a figure of himself, a monumental triumph of the power of the mind. Under it was clearly written so that all could see, "*I am first in the East.*" *

This may be ancient and malicious rumor, but even if true it was a fit part of his vague symbolism. He always knew he would be great amongst the great, and his years were running on; and now, by dint of a carver of figure-heads, his knowledge had come true. Timothy Dexter was among the great at last, by the simple effort of his mind. If it is true that his image stood there, the caption that explained it is not much out of keeping. In his own strange

* It is even rumored by Oliver Wendell Holmes and others that Lord Dexter had *two* statues of himself on pedestals near his fence, one labelled "I am First in the East" and the second "I am First in the West." This painting of the lily is not mentioned by Knapp, however, and we may be reasonably sure it is mere legend.

way he was first in all the east. Even a further phrase, which it is said he added, has its peculiar justice: "first in the West" the phrase runs still, "and the greatest philosopher in the Western World." The Dexter who thought of the images and reared them about his dwelling, was worthy of the title. We cannot deny him now—in his strange and courageous wandering he was a great philosopher.

Certain literal minded persons have drawn obvious conclusions from the presence of Dexter's figure with the rest, but not the knowing ones, whom Dexter loved best. Those of his more intimate acquaintance, who recognized the beauty of the feat, and others not so knowing, must have paused in doubt. There, as in everything else, was a vague possibility that Dexter intended humor. It still makes laughter easy and pity a trifle difficult. Had this Dexter, who knew commercial values so well, completely lost his sense of proportion? Had his egotism finally gone so far that he actually took himself seriously as First in the East? Or could it possibly be that a merry, though irresponsible and intoxicated, gentleman was once again nudging the

ribs of literal humanity? Here it was natural that self-esteem should rise up with an emphatic negation; at least one thing was obvious. Every day the first Lord of America was growing queerer than ever.

He walked about his grounds with his cane and his faithful porcine dog, a trifle more unsteadily than he had, a few years back. He was making peculiar remarks to workmen and callers, sometimes difficult to understand, sometimes simple, and at other times startlingly significant. He joked uproariously with Joseph Wilson; he recounted droll and occasionally shocking stories. Now and again he retired to his writing table, no doubt plentifully fortified with wine and liberally equipped with tobacco. Like the great P. T. Barnum, he diverted himself by playing innocent tricks, emphasizing them by copious draughts of liquor. A hearty "laff" was still better than weeping, though he waxed irascible at rude remarks. He took to collecting watches and clocks until the whole palace was filled with time pieces, which he examined daily, stamping from room to room to see which were too fast, which were too slow, and which accurate in their function. He surprised the jeweler who came to wind them by

saying that he wished a clock maker had the winding of mankind, and ended by a startling dissertation on man himself. Sometimes, said Dexter, he considered man a sort of giant toad. Need one add that such a thought as this shocked a religious community?

Such are the few glimpses that time has vouchsafed us. Poor Dexter did his best to laugh in an environment ill-suited to sustain jesting. An advertisement, which he authorized to appear while the images went up displays another side of him,—the cloud and not the silver lining. Vigorously though it is done, it makes sad reading now:

"Mr. Dexter's Seat for Sale

"I say one great bargain for a great man, if you will buy my house (and all?) that stands out of doors. I am in such a state of health I must sell my Pallace under the worth to go to the springs and one thing more my life is at a risk. Pay a part and good security for the rest; all the guts, plate, and books, horses and carriages, wood &c. A large amount of plate, it will show for itself. I will finish the museum 87 figures, four arches; 17 figures front

and rear next the house; some scattering ones in the rear. eight acres and 107 rods of land, cuts 14 load of fodder; very good orchard. I have no family only robbers; I want to be still, not in my tomb I have one store house to sell on broadway, 2 dolors for 3 if my house, Pallace &c. is worth above 25000 Dolors give me less for I am afraid of my life, of being killed by my son; this is the truth. "Timothy Dexter."

It was a sick old man, overcome by temporary discouragement, who was speaking, for such is the peculiar quality of Dexter's language, that it always has the power of speech. Nevertheless, the advertisement shows that Dexter was not yet doddering. Aside from his efforts to build a palace and a museum, he was actually engaged in business of a sort, and sufficiently engrossed in it to own a warehouse. He was able yet to drive a hard, sane bargain. In spite of all its trappings and magnificence, twenty-five thousand dollars was a good round price for the house, even with the figures. It has been said that the "museum" and the arches cost Dexter fifteen thousand. This is probably a gross exaggeration. In the midst of Dexter's jests with Joseph Wilson,

there is evidence that he put through a clever deal, and that the museum was more of a bargain than its vastness would indicate.

The palace and the museum were mighty affairs, because of a personality, and without their owner's touch they were only a sorry sight. Dexter did not sell his palace, but he had a consolation. It and the museum had done what he most fervently hoped. They had made him a figure more marvelous and mythical than a hero of romance. He was a figure, in spite of bombast and frippery, appealing to the eye and mind. He was something that many had longed to be and could not. Even Jonathan Plummer's greatest effort at eulogy, which made its appearance at about this time, is not without its truth, and let us use it to conclude this chapter of achievement before passing to his last and greatest work.

Lord Dexter is a man of fame,
Most celebrated is his name;
More precious far than gold that's pure,
Lord Dexter shines forevermore.

His noble house, it shines more bright
Than Lebanon's most pleasant height;
Never was one who stepped therein
Who wanted to come out again.

His house is fill'd with sweet perfumes,
Rich furniture doth fill his rooms;
Inside and out it is adorn'd,
And on the top an eagle's form'd.

His house is white and trimm'd with green,
For many miles it may be seen;
It shines as bright as any star,
The fame of it has spread afar.

Lord Dexter, thou, whose name alone
Shines brighter than king George's throne;
Thy name shall stand in books of fame,
And princes shall his name proclaim.

Lord Dexter hath a coach beside,
In pomp and splendor he doth ride;
The horses champ the silver bitt,
And throw the foam around their feet.

The images around him stand,
For they were made by his command,
Looking to see Lord Dexter come,
With fixed eyes they see him home.

Four lions stand to guard the door,
With mouths wide open to devour
All enemies who dare oppose
Lord Dexter or his shady groves.

Lord Dexter, like king Solomon,
Hath gold and silver by the ton,
And bells to churches he hath given,
To worship the great king of heaven.

His mighty deeds they are so great,
He's honor'd both in church and state,
And when he comes all must give way,
To let Lord Dexter bear the sway.

When Dexter dies all things shall droop,
Lord East, Lord West, Lord North shall stoop,
And then Lord South with pomp shall come,
And bear his body to the tomb.

His tomb most charming to behold,
A thousand sweets it doth unfold;
When Dexter dies shall willows weep,
And mourning friends shall fill the street.

May Washington forever stand;
May Jefferson, by God's command,
Support the right of all mankind,
John Adams not a whit behind.

America, with all your host,
Lord Dexter in a bumper toast;
May he enjoy his life in peace,
And when he's dead his name not cease.

In heaven may he always reign,
For there's no sorrow, sin, nor pain;
Unto the world I leave the rest,
For to pronounce Lord Dexter blest.

CHAPTER X

In Which Dexter Breaks his last Lance against the Windmill of his Life through the Pages of a Most Singular and Philosophic Book.

THERE was another poem regarding Dexter which appeared at this same period, of a character not so complimentary, but giving an accurate delineation of Newburyport's great citizen. The reason for the poem was again that fortunate bridge across the Merrimack, already the source of so much interesting inspiration. Its erection had drawn from Dexter a speech; his interest in its prosperity was in a measure, responsible for as remarkable a museum as a young nation might hope to see; and finally, as the museum was emerging from crude wood and taking shape for a gaping public, Dexter's attention was brought yet again to this bridge and the river. To his deep concern, he discovered that a petition was being brought before the Massachsetts General Court for another bridge to span the

Merrimack as part of a turnpike from Newburyport to Portsmouth. Dexter had good reason to be startled, since such an overt act was a direct threat to his bridge's prosperity, and his own as well.

Being capable of anything at this period of his life, it was not long before his pent-up feelings found their outlet by way of the press. His protest took the form of an open letter, presumably to the State Senate and House, which dwelt in great detail on the bridge situation of the Merrimack valley. The Newburyport Herald was so intrigued by these observations and their method of presentation that the whole was inserted "by leave" into a closely written column. Good cause indeed did the Newburyport Herald have to be interested, for probably never in the history of the world before was there a more audacious and peculiar piece of composition, not even excepting the remarkable manuscripts of medieval times. No one except Dexter has dared to express a written idea with so little educational equipment to render an idea plausible. The "Chaticism," the "Essay on the Soul," and other letters, except shorter ones, had all undergone certain corrections before appearing, but here the printer re-

lented, and allowed ignorant genius to make a coarse gesture at convention.

At first glance the essay appeared as incoherent as the Deer Island oration, seemingly composed in an

unknown tongue. It was a close filled column of type, made of one or two syllable words which were almost wholly misspelled, and only based on a system of coarse phonetics which was hardly a system, because not infrequently the same word was printed in a different manner wherever it appeared. Added

to this confusion there was one still greater. With the exception of three numbered paragraphs, there was not a single punctuation mark or break in idea, not a single capital letter to head a sentence! The words flowed on in a steady uninterrupted stream so little marred by sentence structure that it was a miracle that any one could read it.

The remarks on the bridge were such that they could not go unnoticed. A gentleman by the pen name of "Rusticus" took them up, and, dizzied and bewildered, wrote a satiric answer, purporting to come from the General Court, which reads as follows:

My Lord, of royal, silken Robe,
We hear that you own half the globe
And though your suit to us preferred
Is outrée, here and there a word
May such a Lord have all that's good
And lambs and Lions when of wood;
Give him coaches, give him horses,
Fortune make up Samuel's losses,
Young flesh give him—every pleasure,
Stone rings, pictures without measure;
Brandy, give good punch and cider,
Gold-lac'd waistcoats stretched still wider,
Nectar'd oceans let him drink
But, God's withhold—a pen and ink!

If the gods had heeded this call, there would be no Dexter now. Not a tangible trace would remain of him but the golden eagle, which some day must go the way of all eagles whether of wood or of flesh, and a whole weary world that still loves relief in curiosity would have lost one of the most amazing attempts at literature ever struck from type. To the eternal praise of those muses who foster a creative instinct, a pen which was very nearly immortal was left in Dexter's hand. Not content with this, they injected, into the ink this pen explored, a heavy ambrosial fluid, more potent than the nectar'd oceans mentioned in the poem. These were the gifts the muses thrust upon him, these, and the desire to write a book.

As far back as his residence in the Tracy mansion, ambitions of a literary nature had stirred in Dexter. He was one of those unfortunates who have distracted generations of newspaper editors by their persistent efforts to get their thoughts in print. Instead of being quenched in time by gin, brandy, and fine wine this flame of ambition was fed by the very spirits which Timothy Dexter drank, for each year it had waxed greater. Inevitably, he had to write.

Those vast unformed ideas, which every one who has followed his career has perceived flashing within him like fitful flashes of lightning in the dark, were bound to have an outlet. He had been diffident in the beginning, he had taken "mister printer" into his confidence with a frank, almost pathetic apology for his untutored style. Finally, in a later communication, he set his troubles more frankly still before the public and revealed the very heart which beat beneath the gold-laced waistcoat. In the year 1798, he asked for some of those "Coleage Lant" folk, whom he seems to have suspected were also "Devel lant" to give him a helping hand, "for" he said in substance, "I know my ideas are right, only I can't express them as well as others." Dexter knew his limitations. Much as he disliked the "Coleage Lant," in his heart he envied them. He was raising the age-old cry of ignorance against learning and smug superiority, with the sad result that such a cry often gains. Alas, in spite of Dexter's call, none of the intellectual chosen of Newburyport stepped forward, or none existed who could fathom what was laboring in his mind. The heartless intelligentsia left Dexter to wrestle with his problem, and left

the world the permanent unequalled spectacle of utter ignorance snatching at abstract thought.

It was much better so. The book which Dexter wrote was his alone. We cannot be sure how he came to venture on such a feat and when he conquered his own artistic compunctions, but there is reason to believe that the stimulus of the museum with its figures was the bottom of it. The undoubted praise which he had received from friends who had read his former compositions also played a part, and as in his adventure with the tomb, the actual idea of a book was probably suggested by some single admirer, anxious to see the result. Rumor has it that he was told that the English nobility frequently resorted to writing and gave away many of their works. Unlike the books of many noblemen, Dexter's work is still in print.

In the year 1801, in the whirlpool of his other activities he sat himself down to the task in which no one would share, and by the end of May, 1802, he emerged from the silences with his whole career complete,—as Dexter, the Author and Philosopher. His whole mind had burst into print like a sky-rocket. He had given his whole personality to posterity in

as complete a manner as has ever been achieved by the written word. He had surmounted an obstacle which no man of his education had ever dared to face. He had undergone all the struggles of authorship, and his thoughts were in a book. It was, as he has said, a "Littel book" but still a book it certainly was. The fact of its being a book was all that gave it any form comparable to any known work of learning.

"We observe," says the Newburyport Herald, "advertised in a Salem paper, a thing just published entitled 'A Pickle for the Knowing Ones, or Plain Truths in a Homespun Dress,' by Timothy Dexter, Esq., of Newburyport. This will be a valuable acquisition to the lovers of knowledge and polite literature."

This short notice was all that appeared, not even a review to recompense earnest endeavor. It seems curious in these later days that Newburyport so little recognized the brightest effulgence of Dexter's life that it was dismissed in two sentences. But, as those knowing ones to whom the "Pickle" was addressed probably recognized, curter receptions than this have been accorded equally remarkable work.

"A thing," the Newburyport Herald called it, at a loss for a better word. There does not seem even to have been a printer in that town where printing flourished, who saw its value. It was so far too modern for contemporary pedants that Dexter was obliged to carry his script to the more enlightened town of Salem, though there it was published at his own expense.

Although perhaps it may be best described as "a thing," it was so very remarkable a thing that it was bound to create enough comment to gratify its author when it was launched upon the world. There was a titter of excitement, and frank mirth on the part of some, and bewilderment, and finally downright contempt. Newburyport could not understand what Timothy Dexter was driving at. Only the knowing ones have ever attempted to guess.

The Pickle for the Knowing Ones catered to rare intelligence. The printer, no matter what opinion exists to the contrary, had obviously set down exactly what Dexter had written, in the way it was written. It was like the essay on bridges, which Dexter had seized upon, among other lucubrations, and now gave the world between limp paper covers.

There was hardly a scrap of punctuation, so that no one could tell where a thought began or ended. The author had resorted to capital letters only when he saw fit, obeying some flighty impulse entirely his own, so that the most unlikely words were sometimes capitalized and sometimes not, and proper names were generally in the lower case. Only one letter is invariably capitalized in Dexter's work. It is the letter "I," when used in the first person, and it was Dexter's one correct piece of orthography. For the rest it was sheer type, composed in a whole-hearted lack of restraint which a modernist might envy,—for true enough it was more than a century before its time. It was the writing of a futurist reminiscent of all the devices now used to break from form.

"A Pickle for the Knowing Ones" had one great point in its favor. It was not long—rather very concise, comprising only twenty-four pages of diminutive size. In fact it is one of the very shortest books, known as a book, in existence. As far as its contents went, it was exactly what was promised,—a pickle of words and thoughts steeped in an intellectual brine which made knowing ones from all points of the compass rub their eyes. It contained Dexter's

full plans for his museum, with careful references to particular figures. It contained his views on bridges, and world politics, on the nature of man, on religion, and a description of his tomb and coffin. In a few brief words it outlined a plan for a congress of nations to secure peace, and a further plan for lengthening the week to provide more days of work. Besides all this, compressed into those twenty-four small pages were the writer's views on original sin, the devil, honesty, the folly of Newburyport's separation from the original town of Newbury, a complete and vivid account of Dexter's trading ventures, a diatribe on the blind folly of the clergy, whom Dexter persisted in calling "preasts," and an attack on the alleged incursions of the educated on the laboring man's rights. This extensive list of contents was further swelled by the inclusion of two original humorous stories, a detached narrative of the disastrous encounter with his Chester lawyer, and numerous sidelights on the author's domestic afflictions and personal difficulties. In fact, for the knowing ones who could make it out, the "Pickle" contained views on nearly every matter which had ever crossed his mind, arranged exactly as each of

these matters darted through his consciousness. In those twenty-four diminutive pages Timothy Dexter had succeeded in giving nearly a perfect transcript of himself to posterity. They were his memoirs and his full philosophy, and represent some of the most surprising reading which a scholar or layman can encounter. So compressed and varied are the subjects that it is doubtful whether any other man, wise or foolish, has ever boiled so much of himself or the world into so short a space. Such was the feat that Dexter, without education, and knowing his own weakness, achieved in the spring of 1802, and it rests today as his greatest claim to consequence. Such was Dexter's literary antic, surpassing all his other efforts, which gave Newburyport a subject for gossip that has not been exhausted, though a century has passed. "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones" still stands out in all literature, unique in form, and, for its size, probably unexcelled in its scope of contents.

One might suppose that two such distinctions as these would have occurred to contemporary critics, who might have passed over the Pickle's obvious faults in favor of its merits. On the contrary the critics and Newburyport at large were very hard to

please. All they could see, and all a large part of posterity has seen, was the maudlin whim of an imbecile,—not that "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones" was a glorious piece of folly, filled with a vital force which renders folly pleasant. "Mankind," as Dexter has told us, "is mankind," and there is more in his statement than meets the eye. Mankind has never understood what leads to literary immortality. The public at large sneered openly at the Pickle, and those who had once thought Dexter was not wholly mad before set him down for a fool at last.

As any writer who finds himself in print must ultimately discover, Timothy Dexter had opened himself to criticism from every angle. Although the "Pickle" was privately printed, he gave it liberally away to anyone interested, and thus it soon was in wide circulation. Its perusal evoked an elephantine letter from Philadelphia regarding its wisdom and beauties of style with particular attention to the spelling and punctuation. School children, it is said, composed essays on its folly and the folly of the incoherent gentleman who wrote it. In the National Aegis appeared an "Evening Speculation" on Lord Dexter of such a character that the First Lord

could not but have blushed had he read it. Certainly it would be hard to find an article in more direct antithesis to our hero's literary style, or more completely unfavorable. For once, at least, the mirror of reality was held squarely before his face, if he had the time to glance at it, or the ability to read long words.

"For what purpose," inquired this vitriolic writer, "are riches given to some men unless to display in more glowing colours the disgusting deformities of their Characters? There are many who would pass current in the throng without being distinguished for any positive vices or ridiculous foibles were they not brought into notice by the glare and glitter of wealth. . . . Timothy Dexter in our own country . . . exhibits an instance—This man, had he continued in that situation to which he appeared to have been destined by his birth, would never have been conspicuous for his foibles, or ridiculous for his folly. Had fortune been satisfied that he should have remained a leather dresser, through life, he might have tanned and curried with the reputation of an industrious mechanic and an useful citizen.

"A speculation lucky for his *purse* and *unlucky* for his memory, took him from his *work shop* and

seated him down in a *palace*. The gilded trappings and glittering ornaments of his house serve only to render more lucid and ludicrous the folly, the ignorance and the contemptible vanity of the owner. His incoherent and unintelligible jargon furnish subjects of laughter for his guests: his whimsical taste and capricious temper, furnish subjects of speculation to those who are eager to analyze the wild eccentricities of the human Character! That pride which is ever inseparable from folly, keeps his tongue and his pen in perpetual motion, that his name may be abroad and his memory may not be forgotten. . . . Lest there should be no record to hand his name to posterity, he occasionally calls in the aid of the press, to assist him in proclaiming his folly to the world. The public papers bear witness that though 'a fool may be brayed in a mortar, he will not depart from his folly' and in his '*Pickle* for the knowing ones' he has effectually *preserved the full grown fruits* of his nonsense."

Dexter was right. Mankind was still mankind. Not even his own biographer, Samuel Knapp, has seen much good in the Knowing Ones' literary relish. The Pickle, he announced, contained "all the *saws*,

shreds and *patches* that ever entered the head of a 'motley fool'." Mankind, as Dexter has so wisely said, has much of the devil in him, and roaring lions and "wouls." The wolves had fallen on his wretched little book and were rending it and its writer limb from limb.

"His ruling passion," remarks a third contemporary, "appeared to be popularity and one would suppose he rather chose to render his name 'infamously famous than not famous at all.' His writings stand as a monument for the truth of this remark, for those who have read his 'Pickle for the Knowing Ones,' a jumble of letters promiscuously gathered together, find it difficult to determine whether to most laugh at the consummate folly, or despise the vulgarity and profanity of the writer."

Fortunately, there were knowing ones as well, who helped to heal these wounds, and who perceived more than profanity: and of all the knowing ones perhaps the most knowing was Timothy Dexter himself. His wooden figures were up and his book was out; he too was out in his fullest glory. He frankly admitted, as he strutted about the bases of his wooden images, that his book was a fine book and written

for posterity. He must have had some premonition that he was near the truth, for he spoke more truly than anyone realized who was busy deriding his folly.

"Mister Printers—of N Port," we find him writing, "I thank thee to put thous skraps into your paper I being one of your Customers and I will pa you for it—A Littel mousement to mankind at Large—A Littel sortment to poussel mankind for gassing A bout Nater & things of Noue DisCoverys of men and things. I—I—me T Dexter of N Port Desires Any man or men on the gloube to Exseede me as to what I have Rote in my Littel book; and what I can Rite Consarning Nater and the sole and the frame of man . . . I am the old plane Tim to see any felosofer in the world Ime

"Timothy Dexter"

From all we know there were no answers to this fair challenge, since he remained alone and undisputed in the field. In the meanwhile a more curious thing was happening. In spite of its obvious faults, in spite of ridicule and criticism, a demand for the "Pickle" was growing. Timothy Dexter lived to see it go into two new and distinct editions, with more

pages than the first! There may even have been another edition than those now extant, making in Dexter's lifetime four editions. A strong reason exists for believing so, from a note, which is said to have been written by Dexter at the end of a second edition. The edition may be a myth, but of the note's authenticity, there is not a reasonable doubt. This single note, even more than the "Pickle" has made Dexter famous to thousands who hardly know his name. Only Dexter could have written it, because no mind save his could have conceived the writing, or the turn he gave it.

"fourder mister printer," says this prince of authors, "the Nowing ones complane of my book the fust edition had no stops I put in A nuf here and thay may peper and solt it as they plese."

.....!.....

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sages too coarse for that latter day is, in the main, a faithful copy of some earlier, unpunctuated print, but as for the note on punctuation—where did it ever come from? Was it the hand of Dexter writing from the spirit world?

The only ready solution lies in Samuel Knapp's doubtful reference to the "Pickle," which Mr. Pearson quotes in his essay on the subject. Knapp states that he was unable to find a copy of Dexter's work after the "most diligent search" and lapses into a mocking soliloquy on Dexter's alleged hopes that this work would prove immortal. Knapp's Life of Dexter was published in the same year (1838) that this edition of the "Pickle" was printed and was certainly written before this revised "Pickle" saw light; yet we find Knapp describing the Dexter book from memory. Without discriminating between editions or even mentioning a second, he alludes to the punctuation marks, saying that Dexter "puts them all in the last page, requesting the reader to place them where he pleased." He also states that the "Pickle" had a cut of Dexter and his little dog upon the cover. All this would make it seem quite clear that he had in mind some vanished edition appear-

ing, besides the others which we know of, in Dexter's life-time. The engraving of Dexter and his little dog was made from the life by a Newburyport artist in 1805, which may place this vanished and problematic edition in early 1806.

The task of raking in the dust heaps is a fascinating but rather fruitless work, since the best efforts produce only the above result. Mr. Pearson has submitted the vexing problem to three men "as learned in early American bibliography as any living"—Messrs. Wilberforce Eames, Charles Evans, and George Parker Winship. "I find them," concludes Mr. Pearson, "all agreed in thinking that the note was probably printed by his authority and in his lifetime but in some form not easily discoverable today. Mr. Eames suggests a missing edition of the "Pickle"; Mr. Evans, a broadside; Mr. Winship a looseleaf to be inserted in the pamphlet."

Like the warming-pans, Dexter's remarks on punctuation seem destined to remain a long time in the air, perhaps forever, but let us return to solider ground.

The "saws" of a motley fool, this "jumble of letters promiscuously gathered together" have done

what the author of our "Evening Speculation" said it would. "The full-grown fruits of his nonsense," have effectually been preserved. No less than three, and possibly more editions were published in Dexter's life. There are no less than ten editions of it now in existence! At the very time of this writing a current edition has appeared in the ancient town of Newburyport, and is having a most successful sale. Over a period of more than a hundred and twenty years printings of Timothy Dexter's "Littel Book" have been struck off, not financed by him yet bearing profit. Obviously there is a reason. There are still knowing ones alive to whom Dexter's work appeals, while other more fantastic writing has been lost in that sad Sargasso Sea where dead books finally go. It is no mere memory of Dexter which has kept the "Pickle" living, nor a single remark on punctuation; for no piece of literature has ever lasted a century upon such slender supports. There is inevitably another reason—"A Pickle for the Knowing Ones" itself.

It is a simple and not wholly praiseworthy matter to jest at a cripple's deformities either in life or literature, and it is fairer to pass by the "Pickle's"

faults. They have been accurately outlined in the criticism before quoted without doing much credit to the perspicacity of their writers, since no school child exists who cannot perceive the "Pickle's" legion of defects. It was written obviously by an uneducated old man, whose ideas, even when not befuddled by generous applications of wine, were ill-arranged and peculiar; but it has its merits. In all seriousness, this bold Dexterian effort actually possesses a style of its own, which all its faults combine to give it, a strength and characteristic vivacity that many more accomplished penmen and spellers have tried in vain to achieve. Every page, every line has an utter naturalness that is refreshing to a jaded taste. It gives no illusion of conscious effort, because there was no effort in the composition, and absolutely no endeavor to be correct. In previous chapters, salted and peppered as Dexter wished, enough quotations have appeared to bear out the point. The illusion one gains is not so much that of an author writing, as of a man talking, for in spite of the type the words are all clear speech; and, better yet, it is Dexter who is talking. It is not the philosophy it purports to be, but rather Timothy

Dexter of Newburyport still in the life, bound to stay with mankind, bound to discourse wonderfully on the affairs of "Nater" as long as his pages last.

Take the "Pickle" at any point, and a sentence or so selected at random is enough to conjure Dexter back, even if not given the seasoning of punctuation, which is added here: "I will let you know the sekret hou you may see the Devel: stand on your head before a Loucking glass: take a bibel into your bousum, fast 40 owers and look in the Loucking glass; there is no Devel if you do not see the Ould fellow but I affirm you will see that ould Devel."

Or turn another page and look again:

"Man is the best annemal and the worst: all men are more or less the Devel, but there is site of ods—sum halfe sum three-quarters."

"The preasts fixes there goods six days, then thay open shop on sundays to sell there goods; sum sets them of better than others; when a man is so week he wont do for a Lawyer make a preast of him for week things to go with week things, the blind to lead the blind."

By some miracle which is quite his own, Lord Timothy Dexter is back, nodding solemnly over a

wine-spattered table with the candles shining on his gold-laced waistcoat. His voice, thick and good natured, lapsing now and then into laughter, is ringing through the room. He is rambling on, whether one cares to listen or not, but he is worth attention, for now here, now there he says something that is close to polished wit. Now and then his voice sinks to a mumbling, then once more rises high. He is the true Dexter, the unexcelled philosopher, for one can never tell when he means to be humorous or when he means to be grave, or whether he is grave at all.

It is a simple matter to laugh at the "Pickle's" deformities but its perfection is also humorous, since most of it is written in great good nature and high spirits. Much of it was meant to be laughed at, so much of it that the old suspicion comes back. Perhaps none of the "Pickle" was a very serious effort, although it shows the Dexterian spirit which stopped at nothing and thought of all things. The first edition actually ended with two extra stories, which Dexter confessed were not his own, but sufficiently "drole." We can be reasonably sure he knew his faults as well as did his critics, but can it be that the faults amused him, and that he was laughing too?

"They all caled me a foull, forty years," this mysterious old man has confessed in the "Pickle," and, after discussing his foolishness and that of others he ends with a curious idea. "A good Laff," we have heard it before, but it is worth repeating now, "is better than crying: a Clam will cry and warter wen thay are out of there ellement—so wee the same." Dexter certainly was not always serious, evèn in the midst of his philosophy. "I must say something," he confides at another point, "or I should say Nothing—therefore make sum Noise in the world." And once again we find him saying with a pride we can condone, "noe man sence Noers Ark Dare to Rite of so Littel Larning." It forms, as one of the editors of the numerous "Pickles" has seen, a very fit conclusion of all of Dexter's works, as it would need a long and tedious journey through the archives of exotic literature to find another such example of ignorant courage. Scraps of pulpit eloquence, odd lots of necromancy, astrology and witchcraft, everything that had echoed in Dexter's mind is stored in these few pages. They are like a warped yet glittering and many colored lens held before the world, and indeed they are a lens—the glass of one man's mind,

mysterious, but not to be taken more seriously than the writer took himself; and how seriously that may be, each reader must judge separately. It comprises, perhaps, the "Pickle's" greatest mystery. We only know that now and then, amidst Dexter's lightning changes, he was able to see his work as the community saw it, because he has left a single sentence which tells as much and more. "No matter what Dexter Rites," he has said, "it Dus to make the Ladyes laff at the tea table."

In a sense he has done better than this modest boast implies, for Timothy Dexter has provoked a smile that comes close to being serious from an astute and learned critic, whose kindly words and thoughts will always be taken seriously by everyone interested in American and English letters. No less a man than Oliver Wendell Holmes has beheld the "Pickle" over his own teacups in a singularly prophetic light, although he did not live long enough to see whole shelves of other books spring up, artistic earnest books, equally devoid of punctuation, capitals, and form. Nevertheless, in those pleasant late Victorian days of Boston, he was able to discern a spirit of independence, a beginning of the modernist array.

He even stated, though perhaps not quite seriously, that the "Pickle" is a "famous little book," and thus we must list him also among the ranks of Knowing Ones, for whom the "Pickle's" words were not in vain. But what is it he is adding? Instinctively all other knowing ones must give a joyful start at the thoughts which Holmes has expressed in his volume "Over the Teacups," for there at least Lord Dexter has his due.

"As an inventor of a new American style," says our Boston critic, "he goes far beyond Mr. Whitman, who, to be sure, cares little for the dictionary, and makes his own rules of rhythm, so far as there is any rhythm in his sentences. But Lord Timothy spells to suit himself, and in place of employing punctuation as it is commonly used, prints a separate page of periods, colons, semicolons, commas, notes of interrogation and of admiration, with which the reader is requested to 'peper and soolt' the book as he pleases.

"I am afraid that Mr. Emerson and Mr. Whitman must yield the claim of declaring American literary independence to Lord Timothy Dexter, who not only taught his countrymen that they need not go

to the Herald's College to authenticate their titles of nobility, but also that they were at perfect liberty to spell just as they liked, and to write without troubling themselves about stops of any kind."

Ladies have laughed often at the "Pickle," and gentlemen as well, until Lowestoft cups have given way to Wedgwood and Sèvres, and all the world has changed except the "Pickle's" store of humor. The "Pickle's" humor has stayed perennially fresh, not only through its crass and vulgar ignorance, but even more in the humorous turn of phrase which renders amusing such dolorous plights as a husband's tribulations and a father's woes. It is hard for the gravest not to smile at the things the ladies laughed at long ago. It is sometimes difficult as well not to be surprised at the "Pickle's" flash of sense. Whether Dexter believed it or not, his "Pickle" has given him a lasting notoriety among certain of the intelligentsia. Whether he intended it or not, now and then a particularly knowing one appears who insists in seeing in the "Pickle" something rare and strange. For, consciously or not, Dexter built his own monument with his pen, more lasting than the stone which marks his grave, or his tomb with its Temple of

Reason. Without any visible striving, he has written a satire, a satire that was all his life, and the one achievement of his living. For in the end, when all the laughter at it dies away, the "Pickle" remains a satire still, a mockery which has its serious side. In the final analysis, out of its maze of words, appears Lord Dexter jesting at the world he lived in, jibing at the ways of life, the habits of mankind, and at death itself. In the end, the "Pickle," intentionally or not, is, like Dexter's life, a huge and ill-formed jest, cast at the vanities of the world, at the striving of politicians, of merchants, of ministers, and simple folk, at the uselessness of probing out life's secrets, and at all the ephemeral foibles on the face of a small planet that whirls about the sun.

In the "Pickle," New England's own original Don Quixote of a new-world Mancha had ridden to his greatest battle with his "lite" glowing fitfully upon his battered helm. Lord Dexter of Newburyport, First in the East, First in the West, and Greatest Philosopher of the Western World, Master of the Wooden Lion, and the Carven Lamb, with warming-pans and mittens blazoned on his shield, Liege Vassal to the Ancient Realm of folly, and Squire to the

Goddess of Fortune—had broken his last and weightiest lance against the windmill of his life. He had made his last and strongest inroad into the dizzy kingdom of unreality. He had come back with a broken spear and an unbowed head, but the time was coming when he should return forever.

CHAPTER XI

In which Lord Dexter at last Becomes very still indeed, Has Doubts cast on the Destination of his Soul, yet still remains a Person of Importance.

SUDDENLY after the last great tumult of funerals, wooden images, and books, there comes a lull, a melancholy warning that Dexter's day is nearly done. Another very weary, restless man was soon to go to rest. By the end of 1802 any one in Newburyport could perceive the signs. The eagle on the cupola still glittered in the sun: Napoleon, Louis of France, George Washington, and the rest, still gaudy in their paint, stood in the garden where strange trees rustled, but they were not altogether what they had been the year before; the "lite" which had shone upon them once was dying down, flaring up now and then with its old brilliance, but ever sinking back into an increasing dimness. The magic spell of "Saint James, his Park," was losing its erstwhile power. Through the pickets of the fence, men

could see its Master still, that strange man in his huge cocked hat with tassels on the corners, still followed by his faithful dog. His step was slower than it had been once, and his gaze more vacant, sometimes almost tinged with doubt, that eternal legacy of the very best philosophers. If one was not too upright and Puritanically heartless, one could now and then perceive a certain pathetic hesitancy in his august progress, as he walked past Napoleon's effigy and respectfully touched his hat, or stared at his own figure high above his head. Down the elm shaded streets a rumor whispered in the breeze fresh off the sea, and carried to the wharves where the ships were weaving in the tide, that all was not as it was once in the Palace of Green and White, that the Lord of this weird domain was tottering in his walk between reality and make-believe. It was reported by those who knew, such as the gigantic Lucy Lancaster, whose services were in increasing demand, that horrid doubts were revolving in Dexter's strange old head. Sometimes, the gossip ran, the First Lord of America, even when in his wine, hesitated regarding his actual greatness, and even wondered openly whether or not he was really First in

the East! It was true, for traces of this waning faith are with us yet. All that wonderful and complicated mechanism that was once Lord Dexter was running down, like one of the neglected timepieces that adorned his high-ceiled rooms. The First Lord of America was growing old at last and sick and almost feeble, so feeble that his plaints at his gout itself grew less vindictive, almost to resignation. His years of verbal war with his son and with the "ghost" had now and then a lull, as though he had momentarily forgotten the reason for old bickerings.

The swift, hot flight among the stars, which only Dexter has rightly understood, was growing very slow, as well it might, for he surely had gone far. All the way from a half remembered Malden farm his pathway had led, along a road past golden sand dunes into a town of gold, whose precious metal he himself had touched. All through his town's most golden age he had lived and striven, and had repaid that same town for the shelter it had given him, with something which was not without its value, although no man could give its name. He had done enough to have full reason for being weary and to deserve a recompense of rest.

In his own strange fashion he had achieved something, though no one could tell exactly what it was. When he chose to appear abroad, and walked the busy streets swinging his gold headed cane and watching with childish pleasure the sun sparkle on his jewelry, he seems to have been recorded a certain not unbecoming recognition. With grave humor many who encountered him addressed him with deep respect as "his lordship" and the press called him quite openly, "Lord Dexter." Toward the end of his career, the few records now remaining indicate that his townsmen frequently gave him this jocose tribute, as though they recognized, in possessing him, that Newburyport could boast an ornament not equalled along the coast. Stories already were being told of him by the firesides, and parents were pointing him out to little children as a sight that was worth the memory. Timothy Dexter, after the publication of "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones," was able to see himself, while still alive, in the very process of becoming a tradition.

Jovial travelers from Portsmouth and Salem came in growing numbers to view the serried ranks of images and to address the man whose will had

made them. The younger and hotter-headed knocked boldly on his door, and, when received, introduced themselves in glowing titles as foreign visiting nobles, and Dexter gravely recognized them all. They discussed in fervid eulogistic terms the merits of his book, asking him abstruse questions on many phases of nature and mankind, till doubtless the weary head of poor Timothy Dexter drooped with greater weariness. On one occasion, when hilarity ran very high, the visitors at the palace insisted on placing the temporarily happy lord on the center of his own table and crowning him as he had crowned his poet. Dexter's fame or notoriety which was getting close to fame at last reached such a point that James Akin, a local engraver, did his full length portrait, which he advertised as "Wonderful and Philosophic." It was said by those who remembered Dexter to be an excellent likeness. There seem even to have been individuals in Newburyport who encouraged Dexter to new feats, but old Timothy was not the man he had been once. His answers grew rambling and incoherent of an evening, and his head wagged uncertainly above his glass after a very little drink.

The truth was that all those ills which the total abstainer predicts for the heavy drinker were falling to poor Dexter's lot, not without due poetic justice, for in an age when heavy drinking was in a measure a badge of gentility, Newburyport had long been shocked by her august citizen's avid addiction to the bowl. Nevertheless, one of the few favorable comments which have been made of him was connected with his deplorable alcoholic habits. It is said that in his very weakest days, when drink had nearly put him under, Dexter had none of the habitual drunkard's coarseness of taste. He continued insisting on only the best aged brandy and the choicest wines, instead of degenerating like others to raw and unwholesome spirits. This constant demand for the best, asserts Knapp, was what kept him so long alive.

Timothy Dexter lived for four years after the publication of his book, four limping, dragging years, which his infirmities rendered progressively pathetic; he was fighting that losing fight with time to which all old men must strive to reconcile themselves, though often without success. All his old instincts lingered still in the setting of his sun, en-

abling us to trace them, if we wish, even to his jests and taste for wine. His bright acquisitive genius for trade had yet to leave him, and, like others, he persisted in continuing what he had done best when he was young. He must have chartered at least one other vessel and brought in a last foreign cargo, because his advertisement of it is with us still, as proof that his hopes were the hopes of youth.

For Sale Cheap
By Timothy Dexter
A handsome Assortment of English
and other
Goods
Consisting of

27 Groce Buttons, different kinds, 50 doz shawls, number pieces Calicoes, Dimothies, handsome assortment of watch chains, Ribbons, Bandannas, Elegant Straw Mats, Pewter Canns, Pictures and Vinegar by wholesale and retail

Muslin Handkerchiefs
600 cwt Assorted Pewter Ware

800 yards Flannel, Cotton Hose
1300 Spanish Otter Skins suitable for Napping Hats
1000 wt. Candles 250 wt. Tallow wholesale or retail
All or part of the above will be sold at lowest rate for Cash.

The old love of the shop was still upon him, from which he could never quite escape. He was happy and at home with his favorite word "assortment," which he declared was good for a shop. Better than the world itself he understood the charms that lurked in "the lowest rate for cash." He could still pull himself from lethargy and dreamy fancies to drive a bargain home. When the project of settling Ohio stirred his young nation, Dexter showed his flair, by interesting himself in wild lands and investment, which, if it proved a loss in the end, is said to have been the fault of his executor.

His disposition, originally kindly, grew more and more uncertain as his infirmities increased. The old battle of protecting his domain against incursions of boys and jokers as practical as himself required a

greater vigilance than ever, once his wooden figures were added to the fruits of his large garden. In spite of the most violent vituperations and the employment of a regular night watchman, who patrolled the grounds armed with a loaded weapon, now and then melons would disappear and an occasional image be desecrated; and at such times the frantic posting of large rewards could not reveal the culprit. Coarse and impolite jokes at the improvements of his palace or efforts on the part of outsiders to control his whims began to arouse in this old and sickly Dexter storms of passion which were truly dangerous. His brass bound horse pistol was called into requisition against a member of the "ghost's" family who undertook to assume control, but fortunately no damage resulted.

Finally, on one regrettable occasion, the sight of a stranger on the street, who stood and stared at the palace and the grounds in a manner which Dexter considered insolent, aroused the lord's ire to veritable fury that renders it a sad task to recall the incident at all, since it shows how fast our hero's light was waning. Something in the stranger's manner was beyond Dexter's powers of control to brook. At length he commanded his son Samuel to shoot at

this interloper with a musket, and here Samuel, on the only occasion of which there is record, showed prudence and sense by refusing. Thereupon Dexter himself snatched the firearm, sprang to a front window and fired. The First Lord's hand was unsteady and his sight was bad, which prevented the bullet from hitting the mark, but the scandal which followed was bad enough. A complaint was made and Dexter was committed to the nearest jail, which was at Ipswich, some twelve miles from his residence, apparently because of his stubborn refusal to pay a fine.

Yet even in the disgraceful predicament of being a bona-fide felon, Timothy Dexter rallied his waning forces, and went to jail as a philosopher should. He ordered out his coach with its armorial decorations, stepped into it, and directed his coachman to drive him to the Ipswich prison, adding that no one had ever gone to disgrace in so fine a manner. Once behind the gratings, however, his philosophy forsook him. He sought for a compromise, and was freed at great expense.

It is far better not to dwell long, but to pass over quickly these last unhappy years of confusion and

ill-health, when the master's hand trembled and both the spirit and the flesh were weak. Occasionally he still dispatched communications to the press, but most of his epistles were very unintelligible, and filled with combinations of words which no one could decipher. The ghost of his wife was becoming more and more spiritual, until he spoke confidently of sweeping clear his house, and of marrying some good widow, though he doubted if his resources could stand the added burden. He harped further on the criminal cost of mourning clothes and funerals, and still let his thoughts dwell lazily on politics. If dishonesty and the sins of his countrymen should cause an occasion to arise when democracy should vanish and an emperor should take the helm, he suggested that he might do as well as another for the place. He protested against bankrupts holding office and called instead for men with snug estates, "not praying men, yet just onnest men and no Coleage Larnt." He called upon these same men of learning to inform him whether there was any truth in the assertion that angels had wings, or whether men or horses were ever known to have possessed these useful appendages, and suggested leaving it all to the judgment

of certain eminent men, including "bonnepart the grate."

This vexing problem, as far as we know, was the last he ever suggested to the world. It was in the year 1806 that he asked it, and on the twenty-third day of October of that same year, poor Timothy Dexter was in a better position than others to know the answer. On the twenty-third of October the restless Lord of the East was as still as his wooden images. His green and white coffin had not been made in vain, for Timothy Dexter of Newburyport was dead at last at the end of the fifty-ninth of his meteoric years.

It would not be accurate to say that his passing was greatly mourned—rather, the community which had harbored him and given him remarkably kindly treatment expressed something akin to relief at the sad event.* Yet he was famous enough to have an obituary of considerable size three days later, which was written, it would seem, by one of the "preasts" he had mocked at, and not filled with the kindliest of sentiments.

* "He died unregretted, (as he had lived without the respect of the community)"—Mrs. E. Vale Smith.

"He lived," said the notice, "perhaps one of the most eccentric men of his time"—a cautious statement which required no feeble qualification like the word "perhaps." "His singularities and peculiar notions were universally proverbial." It was as good as a frank admission that he had achieved more than most. "The qualities of his mind were of that indefinite cast which forms an exception to every other character recorded in history, or known in the present age, and 'none but himself could be his parallel.' " Here was something closer to the truth, an admission, though a surly one, that a remarkable man had left Newburyport forever. "But among the motley groups of his qualities, it would be injustice to say he possessed no good ones—he certainly did. No one will impeach his honesty, and his numerous acts of liberality, both public and private, are in the recollection of all, while one of the items of his last Will will be gratefully remembered." This was all the praise he got, and surely it was needlessly perfunctory. The "preast" had not the wit to see how truly bright a light had passed, for it needed one of the Knowing Ones fully to understand. The sanctimonious writer spoke almost

with embarrassment of the warming pans and images, adding by way of conclusion that the Palace "exhibited more the appearance of a museum of artificial curiosities than the dwelling of a family." He did not add that this was exactly what its late owner wished. But in the conclusion of this lifeless obituary came its unkindest cut. "His principles of religion," it said, "(if they could be called principles) were equally odd: a blind philosophy peculiar to himself led him to believe in the system of transmigration at some times; at others he expressed those closely connected with deism; but it is not a matter of surprise that one so totally illiterate should have no settled or rational principles. His reason left him two days before his death, but he has gone to render an account of his life to a just and merciful judge."

It would be hard to find more disappointing tribute to mark the death of a nobleman who, though self-styled, was at least a marvel of the age. In the very sanctimoniousness of the notice one can detect a vein of uncharitable bitterness, as though the late lord had actually bandied harsh words with its pious author, as he had with other clergymen. The doubt

cast on the final destination of Dexter's soul is fortunately contradicted by another.

Among all the partakers of his liberality there was one friend left, who was not afraid to honor the end of a brilliant career. Poor Jonathan Plummer with his star-strewn and fringed livery had fortunately survived his patron, and, though disappointed that he was not mentioned in Dexter's last will, rallied nobly to the defence of his memory, like a loyal vassal of a vanished kingdom. In the same year he published a broadside, entitled "Something New," which is still in existence, and which Mr. Edmund Pearson has been so fortunate as to see and study. Beginning with various bits of information regarding the departed, the lonely laureate ended with a funeral sermon composed in his own flowing periods, in which he expressed a belief that Lord Dexter's many acts of charity would so overbalance his faults when he appeared before the Throne, that he would finally rest in "the glorious company of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"The imagination halts," we find Mr. Pearson saying with admirable good sense, "at the picture of Timothy Dexter making one of this *partie carrée*,

but Plummer's theology is perhaps as good as that of the pedant who prepared the notice for the Newburyport Herald." And with this frank statement every Knowing One now living must heartily agree.

There is one thing in this obituary notice, or rather the lack of one thing, deserving of particular recognition. In all the unveiled allusions to the deceased's peculiarities no mention is made which hints of insanity or idiocy. Instead, it is stated specifically that Dexter's reason left him only two days before his death, thus giving proof that a wide gap exists between insanity or feeble mindedness and sheer eccentricity. A disappointment was in store for those who expected a senile document when Dexter's will* was read, because, with its publication, came new evidence that Lord Dexter could be serious, if he chose. His will was a model of propriety, care and generosity, stating in its preamble, as it proved in its contents, that his mind was very clear when it was written. Though it was dated 1799, a year when he was at his very best, at least he had the wit throughout the more melancholy end of his career to stand

* "It is a singular fact that, while most wise men's wills are injudicious in some features, no one ever found fault with Dexter's."—Samuel A. Knapp.

by his old decisions. In spite of his battles with the ghost and Samuel, they were liberally provided for, as were his daughter, and his little grand-daughter, the child of Nancy and Bishop. Two brothers of Timothy Dexter, whose names one does not find mentioned with his but this once, he also remembered. To one of his friends, a schoolmaster named Joseph Somerby, he gave two of his shares in the Essex Merrimack Bridge, his best silver can, his turtle shell pinchbeck watch (which proves he found it after he thought it was stolen), three of his best silver spoons, and one pair of gold sleeve buttons. To the town of Malden where he was born, he gave three hundred dollars for one of his favorite gifts, the purchase of a bell for the meeting house, and the sum of two thousand dollars, the income of which was to accumulate for a century. After this he ordered the interest to be appropriated annually "for the support of the gospel in said town of Malden." In spite of the doubts cast by his obituary, this should be proof enough that he actually entertained the fixed religious convictions of his early conversion. To the town of Newburyport he also gave two thousand dollars, the income of which was to be applied

annually to the support of the poor outside the almshouse.

It is a curious thing, but as far as we know true, that Timothy Dexter, the most peculiar of all tanners, was the first individual in the whole history of this prosperous harbor town, whose importance to the United States at that time may be compared to that of Boston or San Francisco today, to leave a bequest "for any purpose to the inhabitants of Newburyport!" It may be ironical, but none the less he was a pioneer in charity as he was in other works; but in charity alone has his course been liberally followed by others.

At last the dust and turmoil of his career is sinking down, or very nearly. Only one strange thing is left to tell, though this perhaps is the strangest of all, before we leave him to his rest. It is more like a famous fairy story than truth—the story of the two tailors who made a gorgeous suit for a certain king, who found, after the measurements were taken and the bustle of fittings done that the suit was made of air! Now that the soul of Timothy Dexter has found its answer to the problem of immortality, and his broad domains are inhabited by others, all his

life, all his deeds assume a very airy aspect. As we try to touch them without Lord Dexter's presence, they are nothing, or almost nothing.

Great was the surprise of many to find that his estate and his riches were not so very great in the final inventory, and figures cannot lie.

House and land on High Street	$12,000.00
110 Shares in the Essex Merrimack Bridge	$15,400.00
Two Shares in Chester N. H. Turnpike	$100.00
Furniture, Crockery and silverware, horses and carriages, clothing, and promissory notes &c., &c.,	$7,527.39
	$35,027.39

Where were all those tons of gold and silver we have heard about? Where was the constant aura of wealth with which he was surrounded? It seems, from all the curious may now discover, that all the while it existed only in Lord Dexter's gallant mind. Not before Samuel took up gambling and "that ould Fox" Bishop with his "black Corlley hair" appeared to do his worst, could Timothy Dexter's for-

tune at a liberal estimate have exceeded $70,000. Thirty-five thousand dollars, true enough, was a comfortable fortune for those days, but not great, almost nothing compared to the estates of other Newburyport merchants, and absolutely nothing to the acquisitions of Nathaniel Tracy and Jonathan Jackson whom this tanner had supplanted. It was only Timothy Dexter and his genius which made his money wax until it became greater than the contents of a rajah's treasury.

And as for the rest, the Palace and the Lions and the Lamb, the rest, too, is like that fabulous airy suit. Even the adventure of the warming pans, and his note on punctuating the "Pickle" are shrouded in a dark cloud of doubt. The local health authorities, rendered cautious by past fever and smallpox epidemics refused to allow his remains to rest in the comfortable tomb he had prepared, with its bible, pipes and tobacco and its few good songs. Timothy Dexter in his coffin with its noble trimmings and uncommon lock was buried in the Old Hill burying ground, where many of Newburyport's greatest citizens also lie. A simple stone with an urn engraved upon it, initialled with T. D., marks his

final resting place. Madam Dexter died in 1809 and Samuel three months later, and now they lie beside the head of their house beneath the long grass on the hill, with their quarrels forever ended. Poor Nancy alone lived on, a most pitiful spectacle, maintained as a paying guest in the palace of her father, which was leased to an enterprising innkeeper. She died in 1851, and there are now no direct descendants of Timothy Dexter left.

The ranks of wooden images, Napoleon, Louis, the grenadiers, the lions and the lamb, stood for a little space guarding the portal which should know its lord no more. In a great gale, known still as the gale of 1815, most of them were overturned, and they were subsequently sold at auction "for as few dollars," we are told, "as they cost hundreds." The carving of the First Lord of the East went to the block with the rest, and was destined not to find a single bidder! The three Presidents and the Royal Arch, so very "hie up" stood the longest, but now they are gone also. Today the most diligent inquiries have not revealed a single one of Dexter's figures with the possible exception of one nailed on a barn many miles from where it first stood. Only

the eagle is now left, solitary on his perch above the Dexter House.

Into nothing they have gone, like figures in a dream, just as Dexter's lordly wealth has gone, and just as Lord Dexter himself has vanished, with his dog and his preposterous hat. They are gone, yet they still remain, cunningly mixed with the memory of the man who conjured them up. There are fewer more prosaic or more ignominious conclusions to a life than his, when reality finally stepped in and everything ended in nothing, giving to folly perfect balance and perfect retribution. Nevertheless, Timothy Dexter in his life had done something which has fallen to the lot of few, something as mysterious as the accomplishment of those most miraculous tailors.

Despite all efforts to eradicate it, there is an element so lastingly mirthful and so expansive in his memory, that it has embraced, in a sense, the whole time in which he lived, until to those casual souls who are not students or antiquarians, Lord Dexter has come to represent in himself a whole rich and vanished age. All the cargoes, all the ships, all the coaches and counting houses, all the appurtenances

of an ancient maritime supremacy are Timothy Dexter's now. It is strange but it is true. The name of a roistering irresponsible man who played the fool, and very often was one, is now the one remembered beyond all his richer and more virtuous brother merchants. Up from the shadows comes Timothy Dexter of Newburyport to represent them all, to stand for all their forgotten works. The profusion of the age, its uncertainty, its license, its bright colors and its richness all lie with him, until his ghost haunts every street where the sea wind blows, an ironic shade, smiling tolerantly, reeling slightly with ghostly wine, a period to all accomplishment, a mockery, but a laughing mockery.

Upon that stone which marks his grave has been cut a kindly epitaph, neglecting his brighter phases, but saying what is best.

In Memory of
Mr. Timothy Dexter
who died October 23d
A. D. 1806
Aetatis 60

He gave liberal Donations
For the support of the Gospel
For the benefit of the Poor
And for other benevolent purposes

"Mr." they called him. At the prospect of "Lord" the stone cutter's chisel evidently faltered, but he might have added with permissible license and no small grain of truth,

"He was First in the East."

For no man has ever followed him.

A

PICKLE FOR THE KNOWING ONES;

OR,

Plain Truths in a Homespun Dress,

BY THE LATE

LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER

[Reprint of the Edition of 1838]

THE PICKLE

FROM THE MUSEUM OF LORD TIMOTHY DEXTER

Lord Dexter relates how he was created Lord by the People, announces his intention of forming a Museum of great men, that shall be the wonder of the world, and shall confound his enemies.

I*ME* the first Lord in the younited States of A mercary Now of Newburyport it is the voise of the peopel and I cant Help it and so Let it goue Now as I must be Lord there will foller many more Lords pretty soune for it dont hurt A Cat Nor the mouse Nor the son Nor the water Nor the Eare then goue on all is Easey Now bons broaken all is well all in Love Now I be gin to Lay the corner ston and the kee ston with grat Remembrence of my father Jorge Washington the grate herow 17 sentreys past before we found so good a father to his shildren and Now gone to Rest Now to shoue my Love to my father and grate Caricters I will shoue the world one of the

grate Wonders of the world in 15 months if now man mourders me in Dors or out Dors such A mouserum* on Earth will annonce O Lord thou knowest to be troue fourder hear me good Lord I am A goueing to Let or shildren know Now to see good Lord what has bin in the world grat wase back to owr forefathers Not old plimeth † but stop to Addom & Eave to shoue 45 figures two Leged and fore Leged because we Cant Doue weel with our four Legd in the first plase they are our foude in the Next plase to make out Dexters mouseum I wants 4 Lions to defend thous grat and mistry men from East to wist from North to South which Now are at the plases Rased the Lam is not Readey in short meater if agreabel I forme a good and peasabel government on my Land in Newburyport Compleat I taks 3 presedents hamsher govenor all to Noue york and the grate mister John Jay is one, that maks 2 in that state the king of grat britton mister pitt Roufes king Cros over to france Loues the 16 and then the grate bonnepartey the grate and there segnetoure Crow biddey—I Command pease and the gratest brotherly

* Museum.
† Plymouth.

Love and Not fade be Linked to gether with that best of troue Love so as to govern all nasions on the fass of the gloub not to tiranize over them but to put them to order if any Despout shall A Rise * as to boundreys or Any maturs of Importance it is Left france and grat britton and Amacarey to be setteled A Congress to be allways in france all Despouts is to be thare settled and this may be Dun this will balless power and then all wars Dun A way there-fore I have the Lam to Lay Dow with the Lion Now this may be dun if thos three powers would A geray to Lay what is called Devel one side and Not Carry the gentelman pack hors Any longer but shake him of as dust on your feet and Laff at him there is grate noise Aboute a toue Leged Creter he says I am going to set sade black Divel there stop he would scare the womans so there would be No youse for the bilding. I should have to erect sum Noue won Now I stop hear

* Here the learned author makes a plunge into the sea of political discussion. The wisdom he displays cannot be too much admired. If the princes and potentates of the earth would but take a fool's advice they might save themselves the trouble of fighting. The "Pickle for the Knowing Ones," will teach them how they may compose their differences without bloodshed. Should any one inquire who invented Peace Societies, we can reply, "Lord Dexter." The whole scheme of the "Congress of Nations" is to be found in the lines which follow: yet we dare say, Dexter had never read the Abbé St. Pierre.

I puts the Devil Long with the bull for he is a bulling 2 Leged Annemal stop put him one side Near Soloman Looking with Soloman to Ladey venus Now stop wind up there is grat ods in froute I will Let you know the sekret houe you may see the Devel stand on your head before a Loucking glass and take a bibel in to your bousum fast 40 owers and look in the loucking glass, there is no Devel if you dont see the ould fellow but I affirm you will see that old Devel

Unto you all mankind Com to my hous to mock and sneare whi ye Dont you Lafe be fore hevvn or I meane your betters think the heir power Dont know thorts and Axsions Now I will tell you good and bad it is not pelite to Com to see what the bare walls keep on my ground if you are gentel men you would stay Away when all is Dun in marble Expect to goue out my selfe to Help it thous grat men will send on there Likeness all over the younited States I wish all the printers would send on their Likenesses in 40 days to Timothy Dexter I mean I want the printers to give Notis if pleases to inform by printen in the Nouspapers for the good of the holl of mankind——

I wans to make my Enemys grin in time Lik A Cat over A hot pudding and goue Away and hang there heads Doun Like A Dogg bin After sheep gilty stop see I am Afrade I Rite toue hash my peopel Complane of backker spittel maks work to Cleane it up—in the women skouls A bout it spit in ther hankershif or not spit A tall I must say sumthing or I should say Nothing there fore make sum Noise in the world when I git so ouely to Nash my goms and griyng for water and that is salt water when brot A young Devel to bring it and A Scoyer * to wate and tend on gentlemen A black Suier his breth Smelt wos than bram stone by far but Let the Devel goue in to Darknes and take his due to Descare mankind for A Littel while this Cloven foot is seen by sum but the trap will over hall the Devel in tim, I pittey this poore black man † I thinc his master wants purging A Littel to har ber mr Devel A most but I did Not say Let him Run A way good Nit mr Devel Cary ‡

* Squire.

† *I pittey this poore black man.* There is the same touch of pathos in Tristram Shandy. "The devil is damned to all eternity," quoth Dr. Slop. "I am sorry for it," said my uncle Toby.

‡ Mr. Cary was a clergyman of Newburyport, with whom Dexter had a quarrel.

the sword and money with you tak John mekel Jentel man good Nit

T DEXTER

Lord Dexter relates how he came to Fortune, by Speculations in Warming-Pans, Whalebone, Bibles, and Government Securities.

HOW DID DEXTER MAKE HIS MONEY ye says bying whale bone for staing for ships in grosing three houndred & 40 tons—bort all in boston salum and all in Noue york under Cover oppenly told them for my ships they all laffed so I had at my oan pris I had four Counning men for Rounners thay found the horne as I told them to act the fool I was full of Cash I had nine tun of silver on hand at that time—all that time the Creaters more or less laffing it spread very fast here is the Rub—in fifty days they smelt a Rat—found where it was gone to Nouebry Port—spekkelaters swarmed like hell houns—to be short with it I made seventey five per sent—one tun and halfe of silver on hand and over—one more spect—Drole a Nuf—I Dreamed of worming pans three nites that thay would doue in the west inges I got no more

than fortey two thousand—put them in nine vessels for difrent ports that tuck good hold I cleared sevinty nine per sent the pans thay made yous of them for Coucking—very good masser for Coukey—blessed good in Deade missey got nise handel Now burn my fase the best thing I Ever see in borne days I found I was very luckky in spekkelation. I Dreamed that the good book was Run Down in this countrey nine years gone so low as halfe prise and Dull at that—the bibel I means I had the Ready Cash by holl sale I bort twelve per sent under halfe pris thay Cost fortey one sents Each bibbel—twenty one thousand—I put them into twentey one vessels for the west inges and sent a text that all of them must have one bibel in every familey or if not thay would goue to hell—and if thay had Dun wiked flie to the bibel and on thare Neas and kiss the bibel three times and look up to heaven annest for forgivnes my Captteins all had Compleat order—here Coms the good luck I made one hundred per sent & littel over then I found I had made money anuf I hant speckalated sence old time by government secourities I made or cleared forty seven thousands Dolors—that is the old afare Now I toald the all the

sekrett Now be still let me A lone Dont wonder Noe more houe I got my money boaz.

Lord Dexter informs the whole World of the improvements made and contemplated, about his Palace: describes his Tomb, etc.

To mankind at Large the time is Com at Last the grat day of Regoising what is that whye I will tell you thous three kings * is Rased Rased you meane shoued know Rased on the first Royel Arch in the worid olmost Not quite but very hiw up upon so thay are good mark to be scene so the womans Lik to see the frount and all peopel Loves to see them as the quakers will Com and peape slyly and say houe the doue frind father Jorge washeton is in the senter king Addoms at the Rite hand the prssent king at the Left hand father gorge with his hat on the other hats of the middel king with his sword king Addoms with his Cane in a grand poster Adtetoude turning his fass to wards the first king as if thay was on sum

* *Thous three kings*, are the three Presidents which Dexter placed on the Royal Arch in front of his house. They stand there still. Washington in a cocked hat, and "king Addoms" and the "grat felosfer" Jefferson, uncovered.

politicks king our present king he is stands hearng being yonger and very deafe in short being one grat felosfer Looks well East & west and North & south deafe & very deafe the god of Nater has dun very much for our present king and all our former ones thay are all good I want them to Live for Ever and I beleave thay will it is hard work to be A king—I say it is harder than tilling the ground I know it is for I find it is hard work to be A Lord I dont desier the sound but to pleas the peopel at Large Let it gou to brak the way it dus for A sort ment * to help a good Lafe to Cour the sick spleney goutey dull frames Lik my selfe with the goute and so on make merry a Chealy Christon is for me only to be onnest No matter what thay worshep son monne or stars or there wife or miss if onnest Live for Ever money wont gitt thous figers † so fast as I wish I have senc to Leg horn for many mr bourr ‡ is one Amonks many others I sent in the grand Crecham thous 3 kings Are plane white

* *it dus for a sort ment.* It does for an assortment. This seems to have been a cant phrase with our author, and much in keeping with his character, smacking so strongly of the shop. We find in a subsequent page, "A sort ment is good in a shop."

† *thous figres.* Those figures, his statues, which the sculpture could not carve with a dispatch equal to Dexter's impatience.

‡ *mr bourr.* Aaron Burr.

Leead colow at present the Royal Arch & figers cost 39 pounds wate silver the hiest Councaton order in the world so it is sade by the knowing ones I have only 4 Lions & 1 Lam up the spread Eagel * has bin up 3 years upon the Coupalay I have 13 billors front in strat Row for 13 states when we begun 3 in the Rear 15 foot hie 4 more on the grass see 2 the same hath at the Rite of the grand Arch 2 at the left wing 15 foot hie the Arch 17 foot hie the my hous is 3 sorey upwards of 290 feet Round the hous Nater has formed the ground Eaquel to what you would wish for the Art by man Eaquel to a Solomun the onerbel Jonathan Jackson one of the first in this Country for tast borne a grat man by Nater then the best of Lurning what sot me fored † for my plan having so gran spot the hool of the word Cant Excead this to thous that dont know would think I was Like halfe the world a Lier I have traveled good deale but old steady men sayeth it is the first that it is the first best in this Contry & others Contrey I tell you this the trouth that None of you all great men needent be A

* *the spread Eagel.* The spread eagle was placed on top of the cupola, where it served the purpose of a weather-vane.

† *sot me fored.* Set me forward.

frunted at my preseadens & I spare Now Cost in the work I have the tempel of Reason in my garding 3 years past with a toume under it on the Eage of the grass see it cost 98 gineys besids the Coffen panted whit in side & out side touched with green Nobel trimings uncommon Lock so I can tak the kee in side and have fier works in the toume pipes & tobacker & A speaking trumpet and a bibel to read & sum good songs.

What is presedent answer A king bonne partey the grat * has as much power as A king and ort to have & it is a massey he has for the good of mankind he has as much power as Any king for grat ways back there must be A head sum whare or the peopel is Lost Lik wild gees when they Lous the head gander two Leged wants A head if fore Leged both & 2 Leged fouls the Name of presedent is to please the peopel at Large the sound souts best Now in the south give

* *bonne partey the grat.* Our author here makes a desperate grapple with the knotty question of polities which convulsed then, as it does now every quarter of the country. "Bonne partey the grat" was not yet Emperor of the French, yet the sagacity of Lord Timothy could discover that he had "as much power as Any king for grate ways back." The whole of this paragraph may be read with special edification. Our author disposes of the matter with the decision if not the profundity of a Machiavel. The illusion to the "head gander" will be thought particularly applicable to the present day.

way the North the North give way to the south or by & by you will brake what falers * be wise or keep the Links to gether and if you cant A gree Consoalated † to a kingly power for you must keep to gether at the wost hear it labers ye les see there is so many men wants be the all offesers ‡ & Now sogers poor king Every day wants A bone sum more than other the king cant Live without the feald wee have had our turne grat good father Addoms turne & turne A bout Rest Easey you all will be pleased with the present king give time all did I say Now but the magor part fore fifths at least

TIMOTHY DEXTER

Lord Dexter depicts the evil results of making Two Towns of One; advises against Office-Seeking and College-Learning.

FRIENDS hear me 2 granadears § goss up in 20 days fourder friends I will tell the A tipe of man kind

* *falers.* Fellows.

† Consolidated.

‡ *so many men wants to be the all offesers.* Office hunting, then, appears to have been prevalent in our author's day as well as at the present moment. Alas! there is nothing new under the sun!

§ 2 *granadears.* These were gigantic fellows carved in wood that stood sentry with enormous muskets in part of Dexter's yard.

what is that 35 or 36 years gone A town caled Noubry * all won the Younited states Noubry peopel kept to gether quiet till the Larned groed strong the the farmers was 12 out of 20 thay wanted to have the offesers in the Contrey the Larned in the see port wanted to have them there geering A Rose groued worme fite thay wood in Law thay went the Jnrel Cort to be sot of finely thay got there Eands Answered the see port caled Newbury Port 600 Eakers of Land out of thirty thousand Eakers of good Land so much for mad peopel of Larning makes them mad if thay had kept to gether thay wood have bin the sekent town in this stat A bout halfe of boston Now men mad to be in offess it hurts the peopel at Large Like Carying the Innegent † Lam to slarter Now it would doue to dewide the North from the south all won what I have Leade down but Now keep to gether it is Like man and wife in troue Love Now guving death in the grander you will sous the glory

* *A town caled Noubry.* Our author here gives us the history of the separation of Newburyport from Newbury, when the inhabitants of the "water-side" with 600 acres of territory out of 30,000 obtained an act of incorporation as a distinct town, or in the language of the learned Dexter, "went to the Jnrel Cort to be sot of," i. e. went to the General Court to be set off.

† Innocent.

I say keep to gether dont brak the Chane Renoue brotherle Love Never fade Like my box in my garding be one grat familey give way to one A Nother thous changes is the tide hie warter & Loue warter hie tids & Loue tids for my part I have Liked all the kings all three all our broken marchants * cant have beaths of proffett goue and till the ground goue to work is all that has bin to Coleage goue with slipers and promis to pay and Never pay only with A Lye I gess 4 fifths is Coleage Lant or devel Lant or pretended to be onnest free mansione but are to the Contry forgive me for gessing I hope it is Not so the Leaned is for Loovs † & Littel fishes moses was but a man and Aaron thay had sum devel Like my selfe man is the same give him power I say the Cloak Cukement maters the wost of cheats we hant got any N Port wee are Noted to be the first in the North sabed Day is Not half a Nuf ‡ Night meatans it

* *broken marchants.* What! were there broken merchants too, in those days? Alas! for the good old times! We have strong misgivings that they were not a great deal better than the present, for we shall find in the next line a complaint of "promis to pay and Never pay only with A Lye."

† Loaves.

‡ *sabed Day is Not half a Nuf*, i. e. Sabbath day is not half enough. A hit at the ultra devotion of the people of Newburyport,

maks work for the Docters and Nuses Ceaching Could but them that Lives breed fast to mak up for them that dies poor creaters I pittey them so preast Riden it is wickard to leave poor sols in to the grave all our ministere are imported Very good men foull of pie house Love I kep them A mit Amen at present.

Magnanimity of Lord Dexter.

The yong man that doth most all my Carving his work is much Liked by our grat men I felt founney * one day I thort I would ask sade young man whare he was bone † he sade Now whare what is all that Now whare was your mother over shaded I says my mother was if I was to gess No I tell in Now town borne o on the water I says you beat me and so wee Lafed and it shuk of the spleane ‡ shoue him A

who have long been noted for their disposition to make more than one "sabed day," out of seven, as well as for their attachment to "Night meatans."

* Funny.

† Born.

‡ *so we Lafed and it shuk of the spleane.* This laughing to shake off the spleen, fully corroborates what our philosopher says in a preceding page, that he found it "hard work to be A Lord." A humiliating confession, but which shows the magnanimity of Lord Timothy. Greatness, it seems, did not make him happy!

Crows Neast he can carve one A fine fellow—I shold had all marbel if any bodey could to me the prise so I have sent for 8 busts for kings and grat men and 1 Lion & 2 gray hounds I hope to hear in foue * Days to all onnest men. TIMOTHY DEXTER

Lord Dexter's Dissertation on Man.

mister printter I must gou sum fouder † I have got one good pen my fortin has bin hard very hard that is I have had hard Noks on my head 4 difrent times from A boy to this Day twice taken up for dead two beatings was a Lawyer then he put me blind 7 days 2 tockters he was mad be Case the peopel at Large Declared me Lord Dexter king of Chester this at my Contrey seet 26 mils from N Port my plase there is the fist from solt water to Canedy—this Lawyer that broused me was Judg Livemore son Arther the same Creator borid 200 dolors some monts be fore this & then Oaded me he beat his bene factter it has bin my Luck to be youred ten times wos by them I doue the most for I have Lost first and Last as much as a tun of silver grose my wife that was had 400 wut

* Few.
† Further.

of silver Abraham bishup that maried my dafter ten years gone him & shee sence then & my son Samuel L Dexter upwards seventeene thousands Dolors the Rest by hamsher Col by Rougs * has gokbey † handed preasts Deakens gruntters whimers Every foue minnets A sith ‡ or A groune I thinks sum times the saving solt & smoak & solt peater will in time be very dear if it is yous the more smoak or the preasts will be out of work Littel Like sister france I Lade out A blan to have holerdays one Day in ten 24 years gone I thort it would save the Natision great deale of money *sir* in one sentrey then the prests wood have time to studdery then hammer down smartly make the sulffer smoak in their Nostel under the Cloak of pie eatty the hipecricks Cloven foots thay Doue it to git power to Lie and Not be mistrusted all wars mostly by the suf the broken marchents are fond of war for they hant Nothing to Lous and the minesters in all wars the Case o god Leave the Divel out when it is all Divel If you can bare the trouth I will tell the trouth man is the best Annemal and the worst all

* Rogues.
† Jockey.
‡ Sigh.

men are more or Less the Divel but there is sit of ods * sum halfe sum three quarters the other part of beast of Difrent kind of beasts sum one thing and sum a Nother sum Like a dog sum Lik horses sum bare s Cat sum Lion sum lik ouls sum a monkey sum wild Cat sum Lam sum A Dove sum a hogg sum a oxe sum a snake I want Desepons † to be Dun A way but they wont Never be as Long as prist Riden what Doue the preast preach to the Divel for all there hearaes ‡ old and youn more or Less the Divel I Liked to sade so Divel preaches to Divels Rebouking sin keep it up up sayeth the hipacrits mockers of god habits an Costom is the ods ods make the diffrence I sees god in all plases the god of Nater in all things wee Live and move in god he is the god of Nateer all Nater is god take one Ellement from us one of the fore take the fier or the water or or Eare or Earth wee are gone so wee Live in god Now Less us all be good children doue all things Rite the strong must bear the Infremiteys of the wicked shildren keep up tite Laws Draw the

* *sit of ods*, a sight of odds.
† Deceptions.
‡ Hearers.

Ranes Littel harder stop-theavs as fast as you can bad trade sheuuing Nine Numbers was Rot * in 23 owers when I had hold of the pen five houres & 35 minnits A sort ment A sort ment is good in A shop (——)

the preasts fixes there goods six days when the open shop on sundays to sell there goods sum sets them of better than others bolerhed when a man is so week he wont doue for a Lawer mak a preast of him for week thing to go with week things the blind to Lead the blind so that they may fall into one Dich and so they goue throue the world darkiness but foue peopel have A pinion of there one Not one in twenty as to this world goods and so it is as to the other world to Inquire the way goue to a fryer our peopel A bout the same only call it sumthing Else in Rum † of a king call it presedent but preasts have money to save sols I want to know what a sole is I wish to see one Not a gizard I thinks the sole is the thinking part there is grat minds & Littel minds grat sols & Littel sols great minns & littel minds According to the hevdey boddeys that has the power of our boddeys the same mother and the same father and six

* Wrote.
† Room.

children how thay will differ in Looks complexions and axons sum for grat thing sum for littel thing sumthing Nouw I say I say my figers will pay Intress money * prove it first going over my brige sum more tole then helping the markett of the town Leeting hoses tavern keepers costom the honnor of the town & my selfe TIMOTHY DEXTER.

one thing fourder I have bin convarted upwards 30 years quite Ressned † for the day the grat day I wish the preast Node as much as I think I doue there hearts would Leap up to glory to be so Reader for the time of regoicing to goue to be maried to what a fine widow with her Lamp bourning the Lamps trimmed with glorey the shaking quickers after thay git convarted and thare sins washed A way they stay at home & Let thous go unclene and so it is much so with me I stay at home praying for theavs and Rougs to be saved Day and Night praying for siners poour creaters my hous keeper is in the dark wos then bad ‡

* *my figers will pay Intress money.* He means to say his statues will pay him for their cost by bringing strangers to Newburyport to look at them; thus increasing the toll over Essex Merrimack Bridge, where Dexter was a large stockholder, and raising the rent of his houses.

† Resigned.

‡ Worse than bad.

Crasey to be saved shee says shee has sind A gainst the holey gost I have Asked her what is shee says it is sumthing but cant find out way sends for the preast coms what is the mater gost gost Dear sir & the minester makes a prayer the gost went of mostly not all part strayed behind shee has bean crasey Ever sence the preast cant Lay the serpont houe many Nick Names three things have so sayeth the preacher Amen Amen see fath I du

Lord Dexter against Colleges and Priests.

NOUE mister printer *sir* I was at Noue haven 7 years and seven monts past at commencement Degress on 40 boys was tuck degrees to doue good or Not good the old man with the hat on told them to sueday houeman Nater * walk as A band of brothers from that time to this day I thort that all thous that was brot up to Coleage the meaning was to git there Liveing out of the Labeer If the Coleages was to continer one sentry and keep up the game recken the cost of all from there cradel to 22 years old all there fathers and gurdEands † to Lay out one houndred

* Study human nature.
† Guardians.

years intress upon intress gess at it & cast it see houe many houndred thousand millions of Dolors it would com to to make Rougs and thieves to plunder the Labering man that sweats to get his bread good common Laning is the be t sum good books is best well under stoud be onnest dont be preast Riden it is a cheat all be onnest in all things Now feare Let this goue as you find it my way speling houe is the strangest man T DEXTER

fourder mister printer for a minister to git the tone is a grat pint when I lived in hamsher one Noue Lit babstis * babler sobed A way just fineshing his sermon he says o good lord I hop you will consider what foue hints I have given and I will cleare it up sum time hence I am much worn down Now the wether being very worme to day Less bray † & so went on fire fire & brimstone & grunting & sithing and tryed to cry & snufel & blow the sconks horne and sum the old fouls & yong fouls sot to crying I tuck my hat and went out houe mankind and woman kind is in posed upon all over the world more or less hy preast craf o for shame o for shame I pittey them be onnest

* New Light Baptist.
† Let us pray.

doue as you would wish others to doue unto you in all things Now fear of Death, A men T. D'R

fourder what diffrent wous we have of this world & the other world two good women Lived in a town whare I once lived one was sick of a consumsion Near Death both belonged to the Church very onnest only the well woman was weak in wous & thing says unto the sik woman I thinks you will see my housbon doue tell him I and my son A greus very well and wee are all well and the sow is piged and got seaven pritty pigs and fare you well sister this I believave is serting troue & so fare the well—I shall com A gane in Littel while

* * * * * * *

QUIXOTANA: *Lord Dexter's Pugilism—Rencontre with a Lawyer—the Peer suffers ignominious defeat.*

THIS COMETH GREETING. mister printers the Igrent * or the Nowing wons says I ort to Doue as thay Doue to keep up Cheats or the same thing Desephons † to Deseave the Igrent so wee may

* Ignorant.
† Deceptions.

Cheat and Likewise have wars and plunder my wish is all Liers may have there part of fier and brimstone in this world or least sum part part of it or Else the gouement is Not good it will want pourging soone if a Lawyer is to way Lay a man an brouse him unmassely All most to Death A sitteson that pays twentey fore Dolors for Careags and more than one Dolor A week to ment the hiways and my being Libperel is in part of this bloddey Afare No sauage would beat a man as I was beaten almost to Death I Did not know houe these men Came to keep sade Lawyer from quite kiling of me till sum time After three men saw the Axon of the blodey seene without massay and carried sade Dexter in to the house sun fainting or Neare to it se and behold the olful site bleading and blind of one Eye twoue brousings in two hours at Least Now Laws in this part of the world Now part of the world A man of money to Live those I lend money to sind A Lawyer and others thay youse me the wost it maks Inemye then those Rogs if there is Any that call me A foull and pick A Qualrel with me A bout my Nous papers so as to pay the Lawyer Craft to make up the molton Calf Not an Ox Now the town of Chester has Lost two *hun-*

dred wate of silver at Least I beleuv more money Now thay may have me in the town or a Lawyer Chouse for yourselves my frinds and felow mortals pease be with you All A men selagh finely brethren sum thing more Coming——

TIMOTHY DEXTER

Chester Sept the 29 1796.

Lord Dexter discourses very learnedly on Bridges; arrives to the conclusion that Newburyport will double its population in thirty years, and ends with a splendid donation to the town to be remembered in his will,

I SAY to houme in may consarne Now to our Rulers for a hearing in the first plase Dexter and others consarned in the first brigge on the merremak * it has payed to the town of N Port and Cuntry at large twenty per sent, one thirde to each party, the owners one thirde of twenty per sent. This is worrey of prase sense this brigge was finished two more briges has been done over A bove on the same River. the

* This chapter is taken up with the "bridge question," which related to the three bridges over the Merrimack, namely, Essex Merrimack Bridge, which our author sometimes calls "Dexter's Brigg," the bridge at Haverhill, and the Rocks Bridge, between these two.

Rocks brige is a wast of money and Laber if there was no Rocks brigg the havrel brigg would barly pay the undertakers in bilding sade brigg Now no onnest men can burne at the hart with gruging the proffets of any one of those brigges. The Rocks þrigg is most dun the money is Lost havvrel barly pays the way when the Rocks brigg is Dun and Now more Dexters brigg and others oners doue but have half so much Intrest as bankers the Repars & & & so on has bin grate to finish the Repars back and fored to next ougest is five thousand dolars in nine or ten years or there A bouts and you all know how money has been sum part of the time very bad in worth

the town of N Port is likely to grow in thirty years to Doubel be twelve thousand peopel three thousand A bove this brigg talked of

No 2 further please your honours there is A bout Eight hundred Rodd in lenth to the Deare Oilen * brigg & one hundred Rod in weth to bring it square Nobel house Lotts Number of bilding yards up to this Deare Oilen Brigg and many plases for warfes Nater has formed N Port and part of Noubry as well for pease and war all together as well as the

* Deer Island, at Essex Merrimack Bridge.

Lord would wish to have it and now lett us be wise in proving in proving it n pease and godly love Not gruging one Another if sixty three oners was now as at first in Dear oilen brigg this hart burning wodent be sot on fier Now but twenty five oners such and such passons feels hurt pretending there is toue much profets to Dexter in petickler he has twelve per sent grate mestake they chouse to Lye to hurt me becose it is the most of my bread the best Anker to my ship I have bought at fifty pounds A share in twelve monts past, people has offen asked me why I did not bye the holl I have offen told them mankind was mankind it wod not dou nor wod it dou for a foue people to hold all the public seccoureteys for mankind was so much of what wee Call the Devel or Rouring Lions or wouls.

No 3 fouder there is plenty of Complant of the difficulty of pasing those briges Now as it is troue if those giddy people have Liberty to bould A brigg it wont pay but three or four per sent at most then they must have one halfe the passing of my brigg as I call it A mad bisness Now as for A turn pik from Newbrey brige to Epsswith * is not bad it may be doue

* Ipswich.

middling well six one way half a Dozen tother way & from Epsswith to beble * brigg and so on to Boston Amen or from Dexters brige to moulden † brigg or Reather to Noue boston brigg it may have its wate as much as Ever wee ant Ripe for so many grate things wate seven years Longer time

I say wate twelve years before you have Any more briges within four miles of meremack brigg I have it in contemplasion to give twenty five shares to the town of N Port to be kept at there expence in Repars the Incom for mending streets in the town of N Port for that sole yous to be fixed in my last will—well Dun I meane this After 12 years for the town of N Port to hav twenty five shars from march first day one thousand Eigh hundred and two to be in foull forse and power greeting I ones one hundred ten shars there is two hundred in the holl the first Cost and Repars is A bout forty thousand and seven hundred Dollars.

I am a frind to all onnest men

TIMOTHY DEXTER

* Beverly.
† Malden.

NOW WONDER *

T. DEXTER says four things—Wants good judgment to live in the world, in *giving* and *lending*, *trusting* and *borrowing*, For I begin to see I have already given my wife, that *was*, and my son Samuel L. Dexter, and B****p, more than ten thousand dollars, in two years, and neither of them thank me. Now to all men that owes me, be so kind to themselves and me, as to pay me, in a short time, or else call and pay squire Bradbury's son the lawyer in *Newburyport*, without futher trouble and cost.

TIMOTHY DEXTER.

[From the Impartial Herald.]

Messrs. Blunt and March—I say to whom it may concern—to the majesty of the people of Newburyport, Greeting—

It costs eight hundred dollars a year to support a watch in this town, and yet gentlemen's windows are broken, fences pulled down and Cellars broken open, and much other misdemeanors done at night. Are

* This piece and the following were advertisements published originally in the Impartial Herald, at Newburyport. The spelling and punctuation are evidently none of our author's.

the watch asleep, or are they afraid to detect those who are guilty of such practices? Boast not of it, if you call this Liberty and Equality. Newburyport has had the name of being a very civil worthy place; it is a great pity some bad boys or young men should disgrace it. I hope our worthy and honorable rulers will bring those rude lads to see themselves, and lick the dust like serpents, and ask forgiveness of their betters, and do so no more, but repent and live.

Now fellow citizens is it wisdom, is it policy, to use a man or men so shocking bad as to oblige them to leave the town where they paid one Dollar a day to support government?

A friend to good order, honor to whom it belongs, to great men a friend—to all good citizens and honest men good bye.

WHEREAS many philosopher has judged or guessed at many things about the world, and so on Now I suppose I may guess as it is guessing times. I guess the world is one very large living creature, and always was and always will be without any end from everlasting to everlasting, and no end. What grows on this large creature is trees and many other things.

In the room of hair the rocks is moulds. This is called land where the hair grows, the belly the sea—all kinds of fish is the worms in the belly. This large body wants dressing to get our living of this creature and by industry we get a living—We and all the animal creation is less than fleas in comparison on the back or belly of this very large immense body. Among the hairs to work on this great body is that of Nature, past finding out. All we know is we are here, we come into the world crying and gone out groaning. Mankind is the master beast on the earth—in the sea, the whale is the head fish—the great fish eat up the little ones, and so men not only destroy one another, but they are master over the whole of beasts and fish, even over a lion, therefore man is the masterly beast, and the worst of the whole—they know the most and act the worst according to what they know. Seeing mankind so bad by nature, I think when the candle goes out, men and women is done, they will lay as dirt or rocks till the great gun fires, and when that goes off the gun will be so large that the gun will contain nine hundred million tons of the best of good powder, then that will shake and bring all the bones together, then the world will be to

an end. All kind of music will be going on, funding systems will be laid aside, the melody will be very great. Now who can't you all believe the above written as well as many other things to be true, as well as what was set forth in the last Centinel concerning digging up a frog twenty feet below the surface, where it was most as hard as a rock—there was his shape like taking a stone out of a rock. This is from a minister. Now why wont you believe me as well.

APPENDIX.

The follering peases are not my Riting but very drole TIMOTHY DEXTER

[Here follows, in the original edition, a few pages apparently made up of extracts from the newspapers of the day; but as their merits in point of originality, although "very drole" are not equal to the drollery of Lord Timothy himself, we have thought it best to omit them.]

[Note to Dexter's second Edition.]

fouder mister printer the Nowing ones complane of my book the fust edition had no stops I put in A Nuf here and thay may peper and solt it as they plese

The following extracts containing important sidelights on Lord Dexter's domestic difficulties and showing some of the very finest of his poetic aspirations, are contained in a "revised edition" of A PICKLE FOR THE KNOWING ONES *published in Newburyport by Enoch Hale, Jr., in 1847. These particular chapters are absent from the other edition, which possibly indicates that other works of Dexter's were extant at that time. The spelling has not been altered but the editor added punctuation in such a way that the most puzzling passages suddenly blossom into sense. The extracts from the "Pickle"*

which have appeared in our narration of his lordship's life were taken largely from this useful little volume.

Lord Dexter's Domestic Afflictions

My frinds & felow mortals, there is A first Cose of all things, most Comonly; so it Came to pass that one Abraham bishup got A quanted with my Dafter—shee A babey, he Old in Eage and larning, and Colage lant & lawyer lant and preast lant and masonik lant and Divel lant; he was then nothing as for Cash; he being A fox, and A old fox, he was After the graps; he tasted of them he Cryed out, sower; this Annemel sent my Dafter home; he sade A b did Not git all the Lovs & little fishes, but got A part—and now 9 years I have Now had my Dafter Crasey, in & by the Cose of this wild A b; hell on Earth; o, o, pity me, All good felow mortels, sade Creater, A b, mad with larning, & as pour as A snake, and as proud as Lousefer; he sade his father was worth twenty thousand Dolars, & he was Not more than five thosand Dolors; he sent for bishup bass to be married befor publessed, & Insisted to be maried; he says Dexter may Crye them Down in the lore

Reagon. After some time thay got published; then he in sisted not to have Any witness; went and hid, finly my gost, my wife, that was the gost; 3 years last march; thay whare maried; I was maried to the gost thirtey five last may; I have bin in hell all the time—more so sence Abraham bishup got in to my house; he hurt me and family one tun of silver; it was the Cose of my parting with mis Dexter. Now I am free; Now for A wife that has A sole—the gost was A gisard & A Cose all Round her. A b striking my Dafter on hur side, as shee swares to grat lawyer Dexter and many others, I be leave it that knows the trouth; the bloue he gave hur on the side, she had to put plasters on hur side Neare three years; when likker is in, the wit is scattered. A b is the beast or Creater two leged, Conekett boull—short Neck, boull head, thik hare, big sholders, black Corlley hare, he wants to be A god, but what I sot sade Creater Down at short A quatence, I Can prove it my selfe by men of the sekent magnetoude; my gesing of the Creater is turned out Acording to my gessing—and when I see my father, the grat good man, father Thomas geffison, I will Let the Cat out of the bag, and give lite to the blind. sade A b will Doue for

sum offess—Evereye Annemel will Doue for sumthing; A b will make a midling good Camp Collemon, A thing hier; if I am a Roug in grane, so be it; A Lepard Cant Altur hur spots, Nor beaver wont groue on a hoggs back. I be Leave if my father, the presedente knowe the holl trouth of A bs treatment to my Dafter, from her mouth, the grat man would shed tears with greafe, and all good peopel Like wise; shoking is the A fare.

Forbid by the Ghost of his Wife to become a Mason; Makes a contract with the Ghost to quit his estate.

TO MANKIND AT LARGE: I Never had the honor to be Long to that onerable mesonek Order. I Noked once, twise, three times, & the gohst Apeared, sade, 'thou shalt not enter,' be Cose I have toue much noledge in my head; I sopose had I bin one then should bin to keep open Dors for thivs & Robers; I have Rougs plentey without keeping taven; I Dont want Noe Abrahams, Nor Aney of the order; only fict Ladeys mared, and grat gintel men that belongs out of the town: mared peopel and fine widders I

wish to see, with pleasur, for I wants to marey a fine wider, for I hant had Noe wife for thirteene years next orgest. I gave the gost fore hundred wate of silver to quit the state; grat lawyer passons, the gient of the law, Rote the Contract; the Cose of it was, that mis Dexter, that was, would have my Dafter marey to A bishup—Cosed the agrement—the sole Cose; she has two trousteays, which have the money, to deal out the intress, and she is so ginress shee bys hur Neadls; I bys the pins & sifers & all things Else; shee leaves the intress in the hands of the trosteys. I must have a Companon four good by all, at present with glorey.

To save his Life from the Attacks of the Ghost, offers to sell House, Lands, and Equipage.

NOW TO ALL ONNEST MEN, to pittey me that I have bin in hell 35 years, in this world, with the gost—A woman I maried, and have two Children, Now Liveing; Abram bishup maried my Dafter—sence, the troubel is such that words Cant be Expresed; Nine years disordered for a tun of silver for three months; I could Not have the gost

in my palles; sleep Not to be had; now to save my Life I will sell—if Not, I will let the house; it is as Noted as any hous in the oile shouls, and fourder, in the world, or sence Noers Arke & sence the floud; taking in my self, finly, such a plas No whare in the world; all goes with it—hoses, carages, all but plate and gouels, and Reserve the holey bybel and one bouck more. my old head has wore out three boddeys; it would take a jourey of Doctors one our to find and Count the scars on my head, given by the gost & others. A men.

Clean trouth. T. DEXTER.

Joune, 12, 1805.

Lord Dexter announces the Demise of the Infernal Monarch and the Pope; proposes himself for Emperor.

I say the grate mister Divel, that has so many Nick Names, a frind to the preasts, Now is dead, all, and the pope Likewise, and the founders of mesonic, a Cheat foull of gratness of hell, Dead—preasts Dead and lawyers Damede Dead—A braham b Dead, and all the frinds of mankind sing prasses that wee are

the grat familey of mankind, Now out of hell Delevered from fire and smoak, mourning for Ever. Now all in heaven, uppon Earth, Now all frinds, Now for a Day of Regoising all over the world, as the grate family, all Nasions, to be younited—No more wars, for fifty years and Longer. I Recommend pease—a Congress in france—and when wee are Ripe for a Emper in this Contrey Call for me to take the helm, or a Consler in the afare of trouth. Amen and Amen.

Lord Dexter divulges his anticipations of an Empire, with himself at its head—he as a Quaker Monarch, to give Peace to the World; his views founded on remarkable Prognostics at his Birth.

TROUTH, I afirme I am so much of A fule the Rougs want to git my Jouels & Loaves & littel fishes, without my leave. thay all Caled me a foull, forty years; Now I will Call all foulls but onnes men; Now to prove me a foull, I Never Could sing, Nor play Cards, Nor Dance, Nor tell a Long storey, Nor play on any mouskel, Nor pray, Nor make a pen;

when I was young, I Could play on a Jous harp—it would make my mouth warter. A good laff is beter than Crying; a Clam will Cry and warter wen thay are out of there Ellement—so wee the same. if I had not the gost in my hous, I would give Lite to my brothers & sisters, and have a pease all over the world, and beat the trouthe into my frinds. houe gud it is—houe onnest it would be—and houe mankind has bin in posed and houe thay have bin blinded with untrouths, gosts and mister Divels; thare is Now None of that order, all Lye, the mesonik; if thay will make a book of trouth I will give the Creaters—but I will take the Chare, and put my frind bonn partey on my Rite hand, And the grat ginral meroue on my Left hand; a Nuf to give the sword is in the banks—A Emper—only be still—I will take the helm in Love—I am A quaker—No blod spiled—all in the Love of a father; a Emper you will have in fortey years. I may Com back and see houe you all goue on, and what you ware when the gost is gone, and mister Divel—peace on Earth —be fore I will have a war in my Day, I will be your frind, the Emper, and if I want help, I will Call my frind boneypartey, and gorge the third, and Dewide

the Lofe. Now take Care—peas, I say—Except of what is Rewealed to me—for it will Com to pass. I was born when grat powers Rouled—I was borne in 1747, Janeuarey 22; on this day, in the morning, A grat snow storme—the sines in the seventh house wives; mars Came fored—Joupeter stud by holding the Candel—I was to be one grat man; mars got the beth to be onnest man, to Doue good to my felow mortels. I think I am a quaker, but i have so Littel sense I Cant Deseave. I can swep my hous and git all a Noue, and goue out of hell. Law and trouth and Reason on my side; it must be done—when I git my worthy widdow it is Dun. Not one word of anger as Long as I Live to a good woman, I a firme.

Lord Dexter, like other men of the world, was a constant and enthusiastic writer for the press. Though some of his letters have been collected and many have been quoted in this life there are several gems of composition that seem peculiarly worthy of a modern reader's attention. Several of them here follow, which show, as well as the "Pickle," his sterling character and unparalleled point of view.

Dexter's Humor

I'me Now Come fored to speak of mi selfe of Infermeties of bodey I have more then one I say the gout never head Ake and the gravel for many years and I Cant help it and a very Colding wife is pison to me and I wish to be still and be master of my Cash and therefore it is Rite for my Littel familey to Leave the hous foulley and I wish for one very good housekeeper very good and them that know me will know the kind of woman will Doue Now I will say what kind of a passon one from thirtey to fortey year old a good gade that will trott pase and gallop not to heave one of (off) but Rather of the two heave on I meane right well now stop I goaks I got out of the parth now I am onest I wish for a middling woman for size with a nose like mine Not black Eyes a good seamster and know houe to Cook I meane so as to order to have a good made to tend on you and me as for money the hous keeper and made will have A nouf if the Rite sort they must be sens Abel & onest & Comly & know when to speak & when to be silent then I shall please my Littel familey and the peopel at Large and to have the best of health to

have good Rekamendason and if one or both Lives with me to my Decease thay will have a serting sum for Every year I Live Not Less then the wages upon the strickest honner.

August 14 I a firme by the honer
Dat 1800 of TIMOTHY DEXTER

of Newburyport Now at balton springs Balton spring waters I pronounce Adam Ale for all that Drinks of it Lovs the waters.

Lord Dexter—Again!

1755 in may 9 Day my father put me with a farmer in malden in which I stayed six years and six months then went to Chalston I stayed Seven months At Dresin of skins for briches & glovs—than went to boston, there stayed till I was free—in fourteene days I went to Newbury Port with A bondel in my hand to A plase all Noue to me—I had sold my free Dom Sout at the vandour—five shillings A yard starting in Roum of a guinea Clorth—I was angry —this money I began with Eight Dolors & 20 sents —I had faith by Reading A book—I was to have this world's goods and be Come grate and be Amonkest grat men in the East and to give lite to the blind

where in my fellow mortels have bin Douped for many thousand years with untrouth—Now turn the systom of knollege and Lite into good morrels of onnesty and good Axions—parents and masters begin skoul master begin at Cadde mys and Collegeys —begin minnisters—Leave of Carcrows in Coreg brave good Eyplits—then wee will have the best sogers in the world—om Courage skouls All skouls —the skolars to Larne by giving once a year sum presents to three scolars—the gratest to Larne After this way 3 Dolors for the first, sekend two, the third one Dolor—I will be one half of this town—one thing —those masters are wanting—masters must teach thare skolars to have good manners to there parents and to peoppel in the streets un Cover and not to be toue Nosey—Every sattaday give this Lession to the skolars.

fourder—I Recommend A skoul for to fix skolers to Larne Difrent Langeges—to goue to Difrent parts of the world to trade—goue souper Cargoue and when Lant Navagasion and Caricters good—there will in time take toue hundred brave men for the bisness to the advantage of those young men that would be in want of bisness and grat Advantage

to the marchents—one millon Dolors Annely to this Contery—wis men pos-pos on this—you may make A mendments—all parents ort to studey the geaness of there Children—but the Coulmaster is offen the best judger of scolar—goodbye

TIMOTHY DEXTER

I want the Larned to Let me know if there is Any proufe of Angels haveing wings—or men or horses or Divels—it is all stuff—A Lye—I being A man without Larning please to give me Lite and prove it & I will give a soute of Clous with strips Downwards or Crossways—I will leave it to grate bonnepart the grate and ginrel merow the grate and the grate Tomas pane Amen & Amen

T DR.

"Among all other newspaper correspondents lord Dexter is not the least to be read—if he is not the most perspicuous in his observations and prefound in his remarks, he most certainly 'makes the most fun' although it is some times difficult to determine what he would be at; however, one thing generally prepossesses the printer in favor of his contributions, —they are accompanied with substantial reason

why they should appear, much like our advertisements."

—*Note from the editor of The Impartial Herald.*

Mister printer Sir it is adviseable that no one man in the you Nited Stats that is a bancrup should hold Any offiss, becos they are mostly Not men of good founting to Com from A Rock the mind is not good the sole the thinking part—the hiow lands is bonnteful Rich manne I meane Rich men out & site your brothers Ingous it will make neu Rich frute Lands Not one man ort to have Any offes under govement but thoses of sum snug state A ccording to the offes he is Introusted with Not praying men yet just oneest men and no Coleag Larnt. Let thous work in the vinyards or now good by

T DEXTER

Nomatter what Dexter Rits It Dus to make the Laydes Laf at the tea tabel.

Lord Dexter

(*We have often amused the public with the comical ebullitions of Lord Dexter's genius—the spirit and elegance of his productions are various and the*

following is not a whit behind his former ones, save that, like the beauties of the French language, it suffers by translation.)—Note from the editor of The Impartial Herald.

To mankind at large once more to Cast Pearls before swine, men beasts and devils because the truth set before them, they run away quick with long faces and very ghostly gallouses in their faces worse than bad but have mercy on those dogs of hell that cant bear the truth. Deception they desire, so long in habit to worship the Devil. Now throw by some few deceptions of use and habit and whims six or eight in number; the savings of four millions of dollars in 15 moons, 365 days—What is the way to make those savings? Now I will tell the O fools! open your eyes: throw off the blindness and see O fools; blind to truth. *First:* Shoes and boots to be as good as they were thirty years back, for all men and children of the whole United States and have the gouns as they ought to be, and wear quilted petticoats and less gauzes, and less mourning; and but one third of the people to attend funerals; so many to attend many catch cold, and we want to settle Ohio soon, we

cant spare those beauties to die so soon; we want the number to increase to make us a great nation. The rich must set good patterns, let there be more private marriages. It would be more honor to our women to wear clothes like the Dutch People, than to wear them as they have done. If one woman in a town draw up a writing that they will wear so and so, and sign it, it will become general throughout the states; then all great and good men will pick out their wives; I will be for looking out myself one, but I wont be to a foolish Cost of making a wedding. If I had ten dollars where I have one dollar I would be married on Sunday morning out of the town and have a good sermon to settle the very great importance very serious matter. I beg of you all to use more milk for your healths and less tea and coffee. If we lose 400,000 dollars in one year and gain four millions of dollars look at it. How much we gain in 15 years. Pay the whole debt and it will make all nations tremble to see our good economy. They will shudder and be afraid of the great, wise, noble people—and keep up to what we set out to be, honest Republicans—No King, but you won't go it long without being honest. If you get out of the path,

you will be brought to order. If dishonest, you must have a king. It depends upon good morals. Keep Judas's out of your councils. Watch day and night for mankind is mankind. Pray likewise O peace and plenty, and brotherly love continue.

TIMOTHY DEXTER

Here will lie in this box the first Lord in Americake the first Lord Dexter made by the voice of hamsher state my brave fellows Affirmed it they gave me the titel & so let it goue for as much as it will fetch it wonte give me Any breade but take from me the contrary fourder I have A grand toume in my garding at one of the gras sees and the tempel of Reason over the toume and my coffen made and all Readey In my hous panted with whit Lead in side and out side tuched with greane with brass trimmings Eight handels & a good Lock I have had one mock founrel it was so solmon and there was very much criing about three thousand spectators I say my hous is Eaquel to any mansion hous in twelve hundred miles and now for Sale for seven hundred pounds weight of dollars by me

TIMOTHY DEXTER

the A bove mock founel the grand pall holders or barers Nams Lord East Lord West Lord North Lord South Lord megul (Mogul) Lord Shambow the minister made the prayer was Doctor Strong, thos saxtons—flimsee ones—are (unavoidably omitted).

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N.S.
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C.2

Marquand.

Lord Timothy Dexter.

B DEXTER, T.
Marquand, John Phillips, 1893-1960.
Lord Timothy Dexter of Newburyport, Mass.; first in the East, first in the West, and the greatest philosopher in the western

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